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James Lenox.

4354

Engraved by Chas Heath

ISAAC BARROW D.D.

FROM AN ORIGINAL PORTRAIT IN THE HALL OF TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE.

THE

THEOLOGICAL

WORKS

OF

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING

TWENTY-FOUR SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

OXFORD,

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS.

MDCCCXVIII.

James Lenox.

435 (4)

all his ſtudies his way was not to leave off his deſi till he brought it to effect; only in the Arabic langu he made an eſſay for a little while, and then deſer it. In the ſame place having alſo writ, *Labore et c ſtantia,* he adds, *Bonæ ſi conjungantur humilitati et ſubr niſtrent charitati.* With theſe ſpeculations the largen of his mind could join poetry, to which he was alwa addicted, and very much valued that part thereof whi conſiſts of deſcription; but the hyperboles of ſome mode poets he as much ſlighted: for our plays, he was enemy to them, as a principal cauſe of the debauchery theſe times; (the other cauſes he thought to be t French education and the ill examples of great perſons for ſatires, he writ none; his wit was pure and peaceabl

When Dr. Duport reſigned the chair of Greek Profeſſo he recommended this his pupil for his ſucceſſor, who ju tified his Tutor's opinion by an excellent performance the probation exerciſe; but being thought inclined to A minianiſm, he obtained it not: however, he always ac knowledged the favour which Dr. Whichcote ſhewed hi on that, as on all occaſions. The partiality of others again him in that affair ſome thought might help forward hi deſire to ſee foreign countries. I make no doubt, bu that he, who in leſſer occurrences did very judiciouſl conſider all circumſtances, had on good grounds made thi reſolution, and wiſh we now knew them; for the reaſon and counſels of action would take off from the dryneſ of this narration, and more ſtrongly recommend him t imitation.

To provide for his voyage, ann. Dom. 1654, he ſold his books, and went firſt into France: at Paris he found his father attending the Engliſh Court, and out of his ſmall *viaticum* made him a ſeaſonable preſent. He gave his College an account of his voyage thither, which will be found among his Poems; and ſome farther obſerva- tions in a letter, which will ſhew his piercing judgment

in political affairs, when he applied his thoughts that way.

After ſome months he went to Italy, and made a ſtay at Florence; where he had the favour, and neglected not the advantage, to peruſe many books in the Great Duke's library, and ten thouſand of his medals, and diſcourſe thereon with Mr. Fitton, the fame of whoſe extraordinary abilities in that ſort of learning had cauſed the Duke to invite him to the charge of that great treaſury of antiquity.

Florence was too dear a place for him to remain in long: his deſire was to viſit Rome, rather than any other place; but the plague then raging there, he took ſhip at Livorn, (Nov. 1657,) for Smyrna, where he made himſelf moſt welcome to Conſul Bretton, and the merchants; and ſo at Conſtantinople, to Sir Thomas Bendiſh, the Engliſh Ambaſſador, and Sir Jonathan Daws, from whoſe civility he received many favours; and there ever after continued between them an intimate friendſhip.

As he could preſently learn to play at all games, ſo he could accommodate his diſcourſe to all capacities, that it ſhould be grateful and profitable; he could argue a point without arrogance or paſſion to convince the learned, and could talk pleaſantly to the entertainment of eaſier minds, yet ſtill maintaining his own character, which had ſome ſuch authority as is inſinuated in theſe words of Cicero to Atticus, (Ep. xx. l. 14.) *Non te Bruti noſtri vulticulus ab iſta oratione deterret?*

At Conſtantinople, the ſee of St. Chryſoſtom, he read over all the works of that Father, whom he much preferred before any of the others, and remained in Turkey above a year. Returning thence to Venice, as ſoon as he was landed the ſhip took fire, and with all the goods was burnt, but none of the people had any harm. He came thence home through Germany and Holland; and ſome

part of theſe travels and obſervations are alſo related in his Poems.

The term of time was now ſomewhat paſt, before which all Fellows of Trinity College are by the oath obliged to take upon them prieſtly orders, or quit the College: he had no reſt in his mind, till he got himſelf ordained, notwithſtanding the times were then very unſettled, the Church of England at a very low ebb, and circumſtances much altered from what they were when he took the oath, wherewith others ſatisfied themſelves in the neglect of orders.

When the Church and State flouriſhed upon the King's reſtoration, his friends expected great things for him who had ſuffered and deſerved ſo much: yet nothing came; ſo that he was ſenſible enough to ſay, (which he has not left among his Poems,)

> Te magis optavit rediturum, Carole, nemo,
> Et nemo ſenſit te rediiſſe minus.

1660, he was without a competitor choſen to the Greek Profeſſorſhip in Cambridge; of which I can only ſay, that ſome friend (to himſelf I mean) thought fit to borrow, and never to reſtore thoſe Lectures.

July 16, 1662, he was choſen to the Geometry Lecture at Greſham College, vacant by the death of Mr. Laurence Rook. Dr. Wilkins, who, while Trinity College had the happineſs of his maſterſhip, thoroughly obſerved and much eſteemed him, and was always zealous to promote worthy men and generous deſigns, did interpoſe vigorouſly for his aſſiſtance, well knowing that few others could fill the place of ſuch a predeceſſor; he not only diſcharged the duty incumbent on him, but ſupplied the abſence of his learned colleague Dr. Pope, Aſtronomy Profeſſor; and among other of his Lectures were divers of the Projections

of the Sphere; which he lent out alſo, and many other papers we hear no more of. He ſo well anſwered all expectation, and performed what Dr. Wilkins had undertaken for him, that when (1663) Mr. Lucas founded a Mathematic Lecture at Cambridge, the ſame good and conſtant friend recommended him to the executors, Mr. Raworth and Mr. Buck, who very readily conferred on him that employment: and the better to ſecure the end of ſo noble and uſeful a foundation, he took care that himſelf and ſucceſſors ſhould be bound to leave yearly to the Univerſity ten written Lectures; and thoſe of his which have been, and others yet to be printed, will beſt give an account how well he acquitted himſelf of that ſervice. But after that learned piece Geometricæ Lectiones had been ſome while in the world, he had heard only of two perſons that had read it through; theſe two were Monſieur Sluſius of Liege, and Mr. Gregory of Scotland, two that might be reckoned inſtead of thouſands: yet the little reliſh that ſuch things met with did help to looſen him from theſe ſpeculations, and the more engage his inclination to the ſtudy of morality and divinity, which had always been ſo predominant, that when he commented on Archimedes, he could not forbear to prefer and admire much more Suarez for his book De Legibus: and before his Apollonius I find written this divine ejaculation:

Ὁ Θεὸς γεωμετρεῖ.

Tu autem, Domine, quantus es geometra? quum enim hæc ſcientia nullos terminos habeat; cum in ſempiternum novorum theorematum inventioni locus relinquatur, etiam penes humanum ingenium, tu uno hæc omnia intuitu perſpecta habes, abſque catena conſequentiarum, abſque tædio demonſtrationum. Ad cætera pene nihil facere poteſt intellectus noſter; et tanquam brutorum phantaſia videtur non niſi incerta quædam ſomniare, unde in iis quot ſunt homines tot exiſtunt fere ſententiæ: in his conſpiratur ab omnibus, in

his humanum ingenium ſe poſſe aliquid, imo ingens aliquid et mirificum viſum eſt, ut nihil magis mirum, quod enim in cæteris pene ineptum in hoc efficax, ſedulum, proſperum, &c. Te igitur vel ex hac re amare gaudeo, te ſuſpicor, atque illum diem deſiderare ſuſpiriis fortibus, in quo purgata mente et claro oculo non hæc ſolum omnia abſque hac ſucceſſiva et laborioſa imaginandi cura, verum multo plura et majora ex tua bonitate et immenſiſſima ſanctiſſimaque benignitate conſpicere et ſcire concedetur, &c.

The laſt kindneſs and honour he did to his mathematic chair was to reſign it (166) to ſo worthy a friend and ſucceſſor as Mr. Iſaac Newton, fixing his reſolution to apply himſelf entirely to divinity; and he took a courſe very convenient for his public perſon as a preacher, and his private as a Chriſtian; for thoſe ſubjects which he thought moſt important to be conſidered for his own uſe, he caſt into the method of ſermons for the benefit of others, and herein was ſo exact, as to write ſome of them four or five times over. And now he was only a Fellow of Trinity College, till my Lord Biſhop of St. Aſaph gave him a ſmall ſinecure in Wales, and the Right Reverend Seth, Lord Biſhop of Saliſbury, (who very much valued his converſation,) a prebend in his Church; the advantages of both which he beſtowed in a way of charity, and parted with them as ſoon as he was made Maſter of his College, (1672,) he and his relations being by that time out of a neceſſitous condition: the patent for his maſterſhip being ſo drawn for him as it had been for ſome others, with permiſſion to marry, he cauſed to be altered, thinking it not agreeable with the ſtatutes, from which he deſired no diſpenſation.

He had hitherto poſſeſſed but a ſcanty eſtate, which yet was made eaſy to him by a contented mind, and not made a trouble by envy at more plentiful fortunes: he could in patience poſſeſs his ſoul when he had little elſe; and now

with the ſame decency and moderation could maintain his character under the temptations of proſperity.

When the King advanced him to this dignity, he was pleaſed to ſay, *he had given it to the beſt ſcholar in England:* his Majeſty had ſeveral times done him the honour to diſcourſe him, and this preferment was not at all obtained by faction or flattery; it was the King's own act, though his deſert made thoſe of the greateſt power forward to contribute to it, particularly Gilbert, Lord Archbiſhop of Canterbury, and the Duke of Buckingham, then Chancellor of Cambridge, and formerly a member of Trinity College.

It were a diſreſpect to his College to doubt that where he had ſpent ſo much time, and obliged ſo many perſons, he ſhould not be moſt welcome: they knew, as his power increaſed, the effects of his goodneſs would do ſo too; and the ſenior Fellows ſo well underſtood and eſteemed him, that with good-will and joy they received a Maſter much younger than any of themſelves.

Beſides the particular aſſiſtance he gave to many in their ſtudy, he concerned himſelf in every thing that was for the intereſt of his College. Upon the ſingle affair of building their Library, he writ out quires of paper, chiefly to thoſe who had been of the College, firſt to engage them, and then to give them thanks, which he never omitted. Theſe letters he eſteemed not enough to keep copies of; but by the generous returns they brought in, they appeared to be of no ſmall value: and thoſe gentlemen that pleaſe to ſend back their letters will deſerve to be accounted farther benefactors to the Library. He had always been a conſtant and early man at the chapel, and now continued to do the ſame; and was therein encouraged, not only by his own devotion, but by the efficacy his example had upon many others of his College.

In this place, ſeated to his eaſe and ſatisfaction, a ſtation

wherein of all others in the world he could have been moſt uſeful, and which he meant not to make uſe of as a ſtep to aſcend higher, he abated nothing of his ſtudies; he yielded the day to his public buſineſs, and took from his morning ſleep many hours, to increaſe his ſtock of Sermons, and write his Treatiſe of the Pope's Supremacy. He underſtood Popery both at home and abroad; he had narrowly obſerved it, militant in England, triumphant in Italy, diſguiſed in France; and had earlier apprehenſions than moſt others of the approaching danger, and would have appeared with the forwardeſt in a needful time: for his engagement in that cauſe, and his place in your friendſhip, I would (with the leave of the moſt worthy Dean of St. Paul's, his highly reſpected friend) call him another Dr. Stillingfleet.

But ſo it pleaſed God, that being invited to preach the Paſſion-Sermon, April 13, 1677, at Guildhall Chapel, (and it was the ſecond Sermon for which he received a pecuniary recompenſe,) he never preached but once more, falling ſick of a fever: ſuch a diſtemper he had once or twice before, otherwiſe of a conſtant health: this fatally prevailed againſt the ſkill and diligence of many phyſicians his good friends.

I think not myſelf competent to give an account of his life, much leſs of his ſickneſs and death: if great grief had not forced ſilence, you, Sir, his deareſt and moſt worthy friend, had perpetuated the remarkables of that ſad ſcene, in a funeral ſermon.

Our paſſions, which have hitherto been kept within the banks, ſhould now be permitted to overflow, and they even expect to be moved by a breath of eloquence; but that is not my talent. In ſhort, his death was ſuitable to his life; not this imperfect, ſlight life, as I relate it, but that admirable, heroic, divine life which he lived.

He died the 4th of May, 1677; and had it not been too

inconvenient to carry him to Cambridge, then wit and eloquence had paid their tribute for the honour he has done them.

Now he is laid in Weſtminſter Abbey, with a monument erected by the contribution of his friends, a piece of gratitude not uſual in this age, and a reſpect peculiar to him among all the glories of that Church. I wiſh they would (as I have adventured) bring in their ſymbols toward the hiſtory of his life: there are many which long before me had the advantage of his converſation, and could offer more judicious obſervations, and in a ſtyle fit to ſpeak of Dr. Barrow.

In the Epitaph, Dr. Mapletoft, his much eſteemed friend, doth truly deſcribe him; his picture was never made from the life, and the effigies on his tomb doth little reſemble him. He was in perſon of the leſſer ſize, and lean; of extraordinary ſtrength, of a fair and calm complexion, a thin ſkin, very ſenſible of the cold; his eyes grey, clear, and ſomewhat ſhort-ſighted; his hair of a light auburn, very fine and curling. He is well repreſented by the figure of Marcus Brutus on his denarii; and I will transfer hither what is ſaid of that great man.

> Virtue was thy life's centre, and from thence
> Did ſilently and conſtantly diſpenſe
> The gentle vigorous influence
> To all the wide and fair circumference. COWLEY.

The eſtate he left was books; thoſe he bought, ſo well choſen as to be ſold for more than they coſt; and thoſe he made, whereof a catalogue is annexed; and it were not improper to give a farther account of his Works than to name them: beſide their number, variety, method, ſtyle, fulneſs, and uſefulneſs, I might thence draw many proofs to confirm what I have before endeavoured to ſay to his advantage, and many more important reflections will be obvious to you, than to ſuch a reader as I am. I will only take leave to ſay, that for his little piece of *The Unity*

of the Church, he has better deſerved of the Church and religion, than many who make a greater figure in eccleſiaſtic hiſtory and politics. But ſuch remarks will be more fitly placed in what we expect from his learned friends of the Univerſity. And to them I muſt alſo refer for the obſervables at the taking his ſeveral degrees, and diſcharging the office of Vice-Chancellor.

There are beſide other particulars, which are grateful to talk over among friends, not ſo proper perhaps to appear in a public writing. For inſtance, one morning going out of a friend's houſe before a huge and fierce maſtiff was chained up, (as he uſed to be all day,) the dog flew at him; and he had that preſent courage to take the dog by the throat, and after much ſtruggling bore him to the ground, and held him there, till the people could riſe and part them, without any other hurt than the ſtraining of his hands, which he felt ſome days after.

Some would excuſe me for noting that he ſeemed intemperate in the love of fruit; but it was to him phyſic, as well as food; and he thought, that if fruit kill hundreds in autumn, it preſerves thouſands: and he was very free too in the uſe of tobacco, believing it did help to regulate his thinking.

I did at firſt mention the uniformity and conſtant tenor of his life, and proceeding on have noted ſeveral particulars of very different nature. I therefore explain myſelf thus; that he was always one by his exact conformity to the rule in a virtuous and prudent converſation; he ſteered by the ſame compaſs to the ſame port, when the ſtorms forced him to ſhift his ſails. His fortune did in ſome occaſions partake of the unſettledneſs of the times wherein he lived; and to fit himſelf for the ſeveral works he was to do, he entered upon ſtudies of ſeveral kinds, whereby he could not totally devote himſelf to one; which would have been more for the public benefit, according to his own opinion, which was, that general ſcholars did more

pleaſe themſelves, but they who proſecuted particular ſubjects did more ſervice to others.

Being thus engaged with variety of men and ſtudies, his mind became ſtored with a wonderful plenty of words wherewith to expreſs himſelf; and it happened that ſometime he let ſlip a word not commonly uſed, which upon reflection he would doubtleſs have altered, for it was not out of affectation.

But his life were a ſubject requiring other kind of diſcourſes; and as he that acts another man, doth alſo act himſelf; ſo he that would give an account of the excellent qualities in Dr. Barrow, would have a fair field wherein to diſplay his own. Another Camerarius or Gaſſendus would make another Life of Melanchon, or Piereſkius. What I am doing will not prevent them; I ſhall be well ſatisfied with my unſkilfulneſs, if I provoke them to take the argument into better hands.

All I have ſaid, or can ſay, is far ſhort of the idea which Dr. Barrow's friends have formed of him, and that character under which he ought to appear to them who knew him not. Beſide all the defects on my part, he had in himſelf this diſadvantage of wanting foils to augment his luſtre, and low places to give eminence to his heights; ſuch virtues as his, contentment in all conditions, candour in doubtful caſes, moderation among differing parties, knowledge without oſtentation, are ſubjects fitter for praiſe than narrative.

If I could hear of an accuſation, that I might vindicate our friend's fame, it would take off from the flatneſs of my expreſſion; or a well-managed faction, under the name of zeal, for or againſt the Church, would ſhew well in ſtory; but I have no ſhadows to ſet off my piece. I have laid together a few ſticks for the funeral-fire, dry bones which can make but a ſkeleton, till ſome other hand lay on the fleſh and ſinews, and cauſe them to live and move. You will encourage others by pardoning me,

which I promiſe myſelf from that goodneſs where Dr. Barrow and you have uſed to accept the ſmall ſe with the great devotion of,

Sir,

Your obedient

And humble Servant,

A. E

London,
April 10, 1683.

ISAACUS BARROW,

S. T. P. REGI CAROLO II. A SACRIS.

Vir prope divinus, et vere magnus, ſi quid magni habent
Pietas, probitas, fides, ſumma eruditio, par modeſtia,
Mores ſanctiſſimi undequaque, et ſuaviſſimi.
Geometriæ Profeſſor Londini Greſhamenſis,
Græcæ Linguæ, et Matheſeos apud Cantabrigienſes ſuos.
Cathedras omnes, eccleſiam, gentem ornavit.
Collegium S. S. Trinitatis Præſes illuſtravit,
Jactis bibliothecæ vere Regiæ fundamentis auxit.
Opes, honores, et univerſum vitæ ambitum,
Ad majora natus, non contempſit, ſed reliquit ſeculo.
Deum, quem a teneris coluit, cum primis imitatus eſt
Pauciſſimis egendo, benefaciendo quam plurimis,
Etiam poſteris, quibus vel mortuus concionari non definit.
Cætera, et pene majora ex ſcriptis peti poſſunt.

Abi, Lector, et æmulare.

Obiit IV. die Maii, ann. Dom. MDCLXXVII.

Ætat. ſuæ XLVII.

Monumentum hoc Amici poſuere.

THE WORKS OF DR. ISAAC BARROW.

Seventy-ſeven Sermons on ſeveral Occaſions.
Sermons and Expoſitions on all the Articles of the Apoſtles' Creed.
A brief Expoſition of the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue, &c.
A Treatiſe of the Pope's Supremacy.
A Diſcourſe of the Unity of the Church.

Euclidis Elementa, which is tranſlated into Engliſh.
Euclidis Data.
Lectiones Opticæ XVIII.
Lectiones Geometricæ.
Archimedis Opera.
Apollonii Conicorum Libb. IV.
Theodoſii Sphærica.
Lectio de Sphæra et Cylindro.
Lectiones Mathematicæ.
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Orationes.

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——*Nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient.* p. 303.

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SERMON I.

THE PLEASANTNESS OF RELIGION.

PROV. iii. 17.

Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.

THE meaning of theſe words ſeems plain and obvious, and to need little explication. *Her ways*, that is, the ways of Wiſdom. What this Wiſdom is, I ſhall not undertake accurately to deſcribe. Briefly, I underſtand by it, an habitual ſkill or faculty of judging aright about matters of practice, and chooſing according to that right judgment, and conforming the actions to ſuch good choice. *Ways* and *paths* in Scripture-dialect are the courſes and manners of action. For *doing* there is commonly called *walking*; and the methods of doing are the *ways* in which we walk. By *pleaſantneſs* may be meant the joy and delight accompanying, and by *peace* the content and ſatisfaction enſuing ſuch a courſe of actions. So that, in ſhort, the ſenſe of theſe words ſeems ſimply to be this; that a courſe of life directed by wiſdom and good judgment is delightful in the practice, and brings content after it. The truth of which propoſition it ſhall be my endeavour at this time to confirm by divers reaſons, and illuſtrate by ſeveral inſtances. SERM. I.

I. Then, Wiſdom of itſelf is delectable and ſatisfactory, as it implies a revelation of truth, and a detection of error to us. It is like light, pleaſant to behold, caſting a Veritatis lucē menti

SERM. I. ſprightly luſtre, and diffuſing a benign influence all about; preſenting a goodly proſpect of things to the eyes of our mind; diſplaying objects in their due ſhapes, poſtures, magnitudes, and colours; quickening our ſpirits with a comfortable warmth, and diſpoſing our minds to a cheerful activity; diſpelling the darkneſs of ignorance, ſcattering the miſts of doubt, driving away the ſpectres of deluſive fancy; mitigating the cold of ſullen melancholy; diſcovering obſtacles, ſecuring progreſs, and making the paſſages of life clear, open, and pleaſant. We are all naturally endowed with a ſtrong appetite to know, to ſee, to purſue truth; and with a baſhful abhorrency from being deceived, and entangled in miſtake. And as ſucceſs in inquiry after truth affords matter of joy and triumph; ſo being conſcious of error and miſcarriage therein, is attended with ſhame and ſorrow. Theſe deſires Wiſdom in the moſt perfect manner ſatisfies, not by entertaining us with dry, empty, fruitleſs theories, upon mean and vulgar ſubjects; but by enriching our minds with excellent and uſeful knowledge, directed to the nobleſt objects, and ſerviceable to the higheſt ends. Nor in its own nature only, but,

hominis nihil dulcius. *Cic. Acad.* 4.

II. Much more in its worthy conſequences is Wiſdom exceedingly pleaſant and peaceable: in general, by diſpoſing us to acquire and to enjoy all the good, delight, and happineſs we are capable of; and by freeing us from all the inconveniences, miſchiefs, and infelicities our condition is ſubject to. For whatever good from clear underſtanding, deliberate advice, ſagacious foreſight, ſtable reſolution, dexterous addreſs, right intention, and orderly proceeding doth naturally reſult, Wiſdom confers: whatever evil blind ignorance, falſe preſumption, unwary credulity, precipitate raſhneſs, unſteady purpoſe, ill contrivance, backwardneſs, inability, unwieldineſs and confuſion of thought, beget, Wiſdom prevents. From a thouſand ſnares and treacherous allurements, from innumerable rocks and dangerous ſurpriſes, from exceedingly many needleſs incumbrances and vexatious toils of fruitleſs endeavour, ſhe redeems and ſecures us. More particularly,

III. Wiſdom aſſures us we take the beſt courſe, and proceed as we ought. For by the ſame means we judge aright, and reflecting upon that judgment are aſſured we do ſo: as the ſame arguments by which we demonſtrate a theorem convince us we have demonſtrated it, and the ſame light by which we ſee an object makes us know we ſee it. And this aſſurance in the progreſs of the action exceedingly pleaſes, and in the ſequel of it infinitely contents us. He that judges amiſs, not perceiving clearly the rectitude of his proceſs, proceeds uſually with a dubious ſolicitude; and at length, diſcovering his error, condemns his own choice, and receives no other ſatisfaction but of repentance. Like a traveller, who, being uncertain whether he goes in the right way, wanders in continual perplexity, till he be informed, and then too late, underſtanding his miſtake, with regret ſeeks to recover himſelf into it. But he that knows his way, and is ſatisfied that it is the true one, makes on merrily and careleſsly, not doubting he ſhall in good time arrive to his deſigned journey's end. Two troubleſome miſchiefs therefore Wiſdom frees us from, the company of anxious doubt in our actions, and the conſequence of bitter repentance: for no man can doubt of what he is ſure, nor repent of what he knows good. SERM. I.

IV. Wiſdom begets in us a hope of ſucceſs in our actions, and is uſually attended therewith. Now what is more delicious than hope? what more ſatisfactory than ſucceſs? That is like the purſuit of a flying enemy, this like gathering the ſpoil; that like viewing the ripe corn, this like the joy of harveſt itſelf. And he that aims at a good end, and knows he uſes proper means to attain it, why ſhould he deſpair of ſucceſs, ſince effects naturally follow their cauſes, and the Divine Providence is wont to afford its concourſe to ſuch proceedings? Beſide that ſuch well-grounded hope confirms reſolution, and quickens activity, which mainly conduce to the proſperous iſſue of deſigns. Farther,

V. Wiſdom prevents diſcouragement from the poſſibility of ill ſucceſs, yea and makes diſappointment itſelf

SERM. I. tolerable. For if either the foreſight of a poſſible miſcarriage ſhould diſcourage us from adventuring on action, or inculpable fruſtration were intolerable, we ſhould with no heart apply ourſelves to any thing; there being no deſigns in this world, though founded upon the moſt ſound advice, and proſecuted by the moſt diligent endeavour, which may not be defeated, as depending upon divers cauſes above our power, and circumſtances beyond our proſpect. The inconſtant opinions, uncertain reſolutions, mutable affections, and fallacious pretences of men, upon which the accompliſhment of moſt projects rely, may eaſily deceive and diſappoint us. The imperceptible courſe of nature exerting itſelf in ſudden tempeſts, diſeaſes, and unlucky caſualties, may ſurpriſe us, and give an end to our buſineſſes and lives together. However, the irreſiſtible power of the Divine Providence, guided by the unſearchable counſel of his will, we can never be aſſured that it will not interpoſe, and hinder the effects of our endeavours. Yet notwithſtanding, when we act prudently, we have no reaſon to be diſheartened; becauſe, having good intentions, and uſing fit means, and having done our beſt, as no deſerved blame, ſo no conſiderable damage can arrive to us: and though we find Almighty God hath croſſed us, yet we are ſure he is not diſpleaſed with us. Which conſideration, wherewith Wiſdom furniſhes us, will make the worſt ſucceſs not only tolerable, but comfortable to us. For hence we have reaſon to hope, that the All-wiſe Goodneſs reſerves a better reward for us, and will ſometime recompenſe not only the good purpoſes we unhappily purſued, but alſo the unexpected diſappointment we patiently endured; and that however we ſhall be no loſers in the end. Which diſcourſe is mainly fortified by conſidering how the beſt and wiſeſt attempts have oft miſcarried. We ſee Moſes, authorized by God's command, directed by his counſel, and conducted by his hand, intended to bring the Iſraelites into the land of Canaan; yet by the unreaſonable incredulity and ſtubborn perverſeneſs of that people he had his purpoſe fruſtrated. The holy prophets afterward

earneſtly endeavoured to contain the ſame people within compaſs of obedience to the divine commands, and to reduce them from their idolatrous and wicked courſes; yet without correſpondent effect. Our Saviour, by the example of his holy life, continual inſtruction, and vehement exhortations, aſſayed to procure a belief of and ſubmiſſion to his moſt excellent doctrine; yet how few *believed his report*, and complied with his diſcipline! Yea, Almighty God himſelf often complains, how in a manner his deſigns were defeated, his deſires thwarted, his offers refuſed, his counſels rejected, his expectations deceived. *Wherefore*, (ſaith he concerning his vineyard,) *when I looked it ſhould bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* And again, *I have ſpread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people.* And again, *I have even ſent unto you all my prophets, daily riſing up early, and ſending them: yet they hearkened not unto me.* Wherefore there is no good cauſe we ſhould be diſheartened, or vexed, when ſucceſs is wanting to well-adviſed purpoſes. It is fooliſh and ill-grounded intentions, and practices unwarrantable by good reaſon, that make the undertakers ſolicitous of ſucceſs, and being defeated leave them diſconſolate. Yea farther,

SERM. I.

Iſa. v. 4. Iſa. lxv. 2. Jer. vii. 25, 26.

VI. Wiſdom makes all the troubles, griefs, and pains incident to life, whether caſual adverſities, or natural afflictions, eaſy and ſupportable; by rightly valuing the importance, and moderating the influence of them. It ſuffers not buſy fancy to alter the nature, amplify the degree, or extend the duration of them, by repreſenting them more ſad, heavy, and remedileſs than they truly are. It allows them no force beyond what naturally and neceſſarily they have, nor contributes nouriſhment to their increaſe. It keeps them at a due diſtance, not permitting them to encroach upon the ſoul, or to propagate their influence beyond their proper ſphere. It will not let external miſchances, as poverty and diſgrace, to produce an inward ſenſe which is beyond their natural efficacy: nor corporeal affections of ſickneſs and pain to diſturb the mind, with which they have nothing to do. The region

SERM. I. of theſe malignant diſtempers being at moſt but the habit of the body, Wiſdom by effectual antidotes repels them from the heart, and inward parts of the ſoul. If any thing, ſin, and our unworthy miſcarriages toward God, ſhould vex and diſcompoſe us: yet this trouble Wiſdom, by repreſenting the divine goodneſs, and his tender mercies in our ever-bleſſed Redeemer, doth perfectly allay. And as for all other adverſities, it abates their noxious power, by ſhewing us they are either merely imaginary, or very ſhort and temporary: that they admit of remedy, or at moſt do not exclude comfort, not wholly hindering the operations of the mind, nor extinguiſhing its joys; that they may have a profitable uſe, and pleaſant end; and, however, neither imply bad conſcience, nor induce obligation to puniſhment. For,

VII. Wiſdom hath always a good conſcience attending it, that pureſt delight and richeſt cordial of the ſoul; that brazen wall, and impregnable fortreſs againſt both external aſſaults, and internal commotions; that *continual feaſt*, whereon the mind, deſtitute of all other repaſt, with a never languiſhing appetite may entertain itſelf; that faithful witneſs, and impartial judge, whoever accuſes, always acquitting the innocent ſoul; that certain friend, in no ſtrait failing, in no adverſity deſerting; that ſure refuge in all ſtorms of fortune, and perſecutions of diſgrace; which, as Solomon here notes, renders a man's *ſleep ſweet*, and undiſturbed with fearful phantaſms, his heart light, and his ſteps ſecure; and, if any thing, can make the Stoical paradox good, and cauſe the wiſe man to ſmile in extremity of torment; arming his mind with an invincible courage, and infuſing a due confidence into it, whereby he bears up cheerfully againſt malicious reproach, undauntedly ſuſtains adverſity, and triumphs over bad fortune. And this invaluable treaſure the wiſe man is only capable of poſſeſſing; who certainly knows, and heartily approves the grounds upon which he proceeds; whenas the fool, building his choice upon blind chance, or violent paſſion, or giddy fancy, or uncertain example, not upon the ſteady warrant of good reaſon, cannot avoid

being perplexed with ſuſpicion of miſtake, and ſo neceſſarily is deprived of the comfort of a good conſcience. SERM. I.

VIII. Wiſdom confers a facility, expert readineſs, and dexterity in action; which is a very pleaſant and commodious quality, and exceedingly ſweetens activity. To do things with difficulty, ſtruggling, and immoderate contention, diſheartens a man, quells his courage, blunts the edge of his reſolution, renders him ſluggiſh and averſe from buſineſs, though apprehended never ſo neceſſary, and of great moment. Theſe obſtructions Wiſdom removes, facilitating operations by directing the intention to ends poſſible and attainable, by ſuggeſting fit means and inſtruments to work by, by contriving right methods and courſes of proceſs; the mind by it being ſtored with variety of good principles, ſure rules, and happy expedients, repoſed in the memory, and ready upon all occaſions to be produced, and employed in practice.

IX. Wiſdom begets a ſound, healthful, and harmonious complexion of the ſoul, diſpoſing us with judgment to diſtinguiſh, and with pleaſure to reliſh ſavoury and wholeſome things, but to nauſeate and reject ſuch as are ingrateful, and noxious to us; thereby capacifying us to enjoy pleaſantly and innocently all thoſe good things the divine goodneſs hath provided for, and conſigned to us; whence to the ſoul proceeds all that comfort, joy, and vigour, which reſults to the body from a good conſtitution, and perfect health.

X. Wiſdom acquaints us with ourſelves, our own temper and conſtitution, our propenſions and paſſions, our habitudes and capacities; a thing not only of mighty advantage, but of infinite pleaſure and content to us. No man in the world leſs knows a fool than himſelf; nay, he is more than ignorant, for he conſtantly errs in the point, taking himſelf for, and demeaning himſelf as toward another, a better, a wiſer, and abler man than he is. He hath wonderful conceits of his own qualities and faculties; he affects commendations incompetent to him; he ſoars at employment ſurpaſſing his ability to manage. No comedy can repreſent a miſtake more odd and ridi-

SERM. I. culous than his: for he wanders, and ſtares, and hunts after, but never can find nor diſcern himſelf; but always encounters with a falſe ſhadow inſtead thereof, which he paſſionately hugs and admires. But a wiſe man, by conſtant obſervation, and impartial reflection upon himſelf, grows very familiar with himſelf: he perceives his own inclinations, which, if bad, he ſtrives to alter and correct; if good, he cheriſhes and corroborates them: he apprehends the matters he is fitting for, and capable to manage, neither too mean and unworthy of him, nor too high and difficult for him; and thoſe applying his care to, he tranſacts eaſily, cheerfully, and ſucceſsfully. So being neither puffed up with vain and overweening opinion, nor dejected with heartleſs diffidence of himſelf; neither admiring, nor deſpiſing; neither irkſomely hating, nor fondly loving himſelf; he continues in good humour, maintains a ſure friendſhip and fair correſpondence with himſelf, and rejoices in the retirement and private converſation with his own thoughts: whence flows a pleaſure and ſatisfaction unexpreſſible.

XI. Wiſdom procures and preſerves a conſtant favour and fair reſpect of men, purchaſes a good name, and upholds reputation in the world: which things are naturally deſirable, commodious for life, encouragements to good, and preventive of many inconveniences. The compoſed frame of mind, uniform and comely demeanour, compliant and inoffenſive converſation, fair and punctual dealing, conſiderate motions, and dexterous addreſſes of wiſe men naturally beget eſteem and affection in thoſe that obſerve them. Neither than theſe things is there any thing more commendable to human regard. As ſymmetry and harmony to the animal ſenſes, ſo delectable is an even temper of ſoul and orderly tenour of actions to rational apprehenſions. Folly is freakiſh and humorous, impertinent and obſtreperous, inconſtant and inconſiſtent, peeviſh and exceptious; and conſequently faſtidious to ſociety, and productive of averſation and diſreſpect. But the wiſe man is ſtable in his ways, conſopant to himſelf, ſuiting his actions to his words, and

thoſe to his principles, and all to the rule of right reaſon; ſo that you may know where to find him, and how to deal with him, and may eaſily pleaſe him, which makes his acquaintance acceptable, and his perſon valuable: beſide that real worth of itſelf commands reſpect, and extorts veneration from men, and uſually proſperity waits upon his well-adviſed attempts, which exceedingly adorn and advance the credit of the undertaker: however, if he fail ſometime, his uſual deportment ſalves his repute, and eaſily makes it credible it was no fault of his, but of his fortune. If a fool proſper, the honour is attributed to propitious chance; if he miſcarry, to his own ill management: but the entire glory of happy undertakings crowns the head of Wiſdom; while the diſgrace of unlucky events falls otherwhere. His light, like that of the ſun, cannot totally be eclipſed; it may be dimmed, but never extinguiſhed, and always maintains a day, though overclouded with misfortune. Who leſs eſteems the famous African captain for being overthrown in that laſt fatal battle, wherein he is ſaid to have ſhewn the beſt ſkill, and yet endured the worſt of ſucceſs? Who contemns Cato, and other the grave citizens of Rome, for embracing the juſt, but improſperous cauſe of the commonwealth? A wiſe man's circumſtances may vary and fluctuate like the floods about a rock; but he perſiſts unmoveably the ſame, and his reputation unſhaken: for he can always render a good account of his actions, and by reaſonable apology elude the aſſaults of reproach. SERM. I.

XII. Wiſdom inſtructs us to examine, compare, and rightly to value the objects that court our affections, and challenge our care; and thereby regulates our paſſions, and moderates our endeavours, which begets a pleaſant ſerenity and peaceable tranquillity of mind. For when, being deluded with falſe ſhews, and relying upon ill-grounded preſumptions, we highly eſteem, paſſionately affect, and eagerly purſue things of little worth in themſelves, or concernment to us, as we unhandſomely proſtitute our affections, and prodigally miſſpend our time, and vainly loſe our labour; ſo the event not anſwering

SERM. I.

our expectation, our minds thereby are confounded, diſturbed, and diſtempered. But when, guided by right reaſon, we conceive great eſteem of, and zealouſly are enamoured with, and vigorouſly ſtrive to attain things of excellent worth, and weighty conſequence; the conſcience of having well placed our affections, and well employed our pains, and the experience of fruits correſponding to our hopes, raviſhes our mind with unexpreſſible content. And ſo it is: preſent appearance and vulgar conceit ordinarily impoſe upon our fancies, diſguiſing things with a deceitful varniſh, and repreſenting thoſe that are vaineſt with the greateſt advantage; whilſt the nobleſt objects, being of a more ſubtile and ſpiritual nature, like faireſt jewels incloſed in a homely box, avoid the notice of groſs ſenſe, and paſs undiſcerned by us. But the light of Wiſdom, as it unmaſks ſpecious impoſture, and bereaves it of its falſe colours; ſo it penetrates into the retirements of true excellency, and reveals its genuine luſtre. For example, corporeal pleaſure, which ſo powerfully allures and enchants us, Wiſdom declares that it is but a preſent, momentany, and tranſient ſatisfaction of brutiſh ſenſe, dimming the light, ſullying the beauty, impairing the vigour, and reſtraining the activity of the mind; diverting from better operations, and indiſpoſing it to enjoy purer delights; leaving no comfortable reliſh or gladſome memory behind it, but often followed with bitterneſs, regret, and diſgrace. That the profit the world ſo greedily gapes after is but a poſſeſſion of trifles, not valuable in themſelves, nor rendering the maſters of them ſo; accidentally obtained, and promiſcuouſly enjoyed by all ſorts, but commonly by the worſt of men; difficultly acquired, and eaſily loſt; however, to be uſed but for a very ſhort time, and then to be reſigned into uncertain hands. That the honour men ſo dote upon is ordinarily but the difference of a few petty circumſtances, a peculiar name or title, a determinate place, a diſtinguiſhing enſign; things of only imaginary excellence, derived from chance, and conferring no advantage, except from ſome little influence they have upon the arbitrary opinion and fickle

humour of the people; complacence in which is vain, and reliance upon it dangerous. That power and dominion, which men ſo impatiently ſtruggle for, are but neceſſary evils introduced to reſtrain the bad tempers of men; moſt evil to them that enjoy them; requiring tedious attendance, diſtracting care, and vexatious toil; attended with frequent diſappointment, opprobrious cenſure, and dangerous envy; having ſuch real burdens, and ſlaviſh incumbrances, ſweetened only by ſuperficial pomps, ſtrained obſequiouſneſs, ſome petty privileges and exemptions ſcarce worth the mentioning. That wit and parts, of which men make ſuch oſtentation, are but natural endowments, commendable only in order to uſe, apt to engender pride and vanity, and hugely dangerous, if abuſed or miſemployed. What ſhould I mention beauty, that fading toy; or bodily ſtrength and activity, qualities ſo palpably inconſiderable? Upon theſe and ſuch like flattering objects, ſo adored by vulgar opinion, Wiſdom exercifing ſevere and impartial judgment, and perceiving in them no intrinſic excellence, no ſolid content ſpringing from them, no perfection thence accruing to the mind, no high reward allotted to them, no ſecurity to the future condition, or other durable advantages proceeding from them; it concludes they deſerve not any high opinion of the mind, nor any vehement paſſion of the ſoul, nor any laborious care to be employed on them, and moderates our affections toward them: it frees us from anxious deſire of them; from being tranſported with exceſſive joy in the acquiſition of them; from being overwhelmed with diſconſolate ſorrow at the miſſing of them, or parting with them; from repining and envying at thoſe who have better ſucceſs than ourſelves in the procuring them; from immoderate toil in getting, and care in preſerving them: and ſo delivering us from all theſe unquiet anxieties of thought, tumultuous perturbations of paſſion, and tedious vexations of body, it maintains our minds in a cheerful calm, quiet indifferency, and comfortable liberty. On the other ſide, things of real worth and high concernment, that produce great ſatisfaction to the mind, and are

SERM. I.

SERM. I. mainly conducible to our happineſs, ſuch as are a right underſtanding and ſtrong ſenſe of our obligations to Almighty God, and relations to men, a ſound temper and complexion of mind, a virtuous diſpoſition, a capacity to diſcharge the duties of our places, a due qualification to enjoy the happineſs of the other world; theſe and ſuch like things, by diſcovering their nature, and the effects reſulting from them, it engages us highly to eſteem, ardently to affect, and induſtriouſly to purſue; ſo preventing the inconveniences that follow the want of them, and conveying the benefits ariſing from the poſſeſſion of them.

XIII. Wiſdom diſtinguiſhes the circumſtances, limits the meaſures, determines the modes, appoints the fit ſeaſons of action; ſo preſerving decorum and order, the parent of peace, and preventing confuſion, the mother of iniquity, ſtrife, and diſquiet. It is in the buſineſs of human life as in a building; a due proportion of bigneſs, a fit ſituation of place, a correſpondency of ſhape, and ſuitableneſs of colour, is to be obſerved between the parts thereof: a defect in any of which requiſites, though the materials hap to be choice and excellent, makes the whole fabric deformed and ugly to judicious apprehenſion. The beſt actions, if they ſwell, and exceed their due meaſure, if they be unſkilfully miſplaced, if in uncouth manner performed, they loſe their quality, and turn both to the diſgrace and diſadvantage of life. It is commendable to pray; but they that would always be performing that duty, by their abſurd devotion procured to themſelves the title of heretics: and they that will ſtand praying in places of public concourſe, deſerved our Saviour's reprehenſions; and thoſe men who, againſt the cuſtom and ordinary uſe, would needs pray with their faces covered, you know St. Paul inſinuates of them, that they were fond and contentious perſons. Friendly admonition is very laudable, and of rare uſe; but being upon all occaſions immoderately uſed, or in public ſociety ſo as to encroach upon modeſty, or endamage reputation; or when the perſon admoniſhed is otherwiſe employed, and

attent upon his buſineſs; or being delivered in an imperiouſly inſulting way, or in harſh and opprobrious language; it becomes unſavoury and odious, and both in ſhew and effect reſembles a froward, malicious exceptiouſneſs. It were infinite to compute in how many inſtances want of due order, meaſure, and manner, do ſpoil and incommodate action. It is Wiſdom that applies remedy to theſe miſchiefs. Things muſt be compared to, and arbitrated by, her ſtandard, or elſe they will contain ſomething of monſtrous enormity; either ſtrutting in unwieldy bulk, or ſinking in defective ſcantneſs. If ſhe do not faſhion and model circumſtances, they will ſit ugly on the things that wear them; if ſhe do not temper the colours, and deſcribe the lineaments, the draught of practice will be but rude and imperfect, and little reſemble the true patterns of duty: but if ſhe interpoſe, and perform her part, all things will appear conformable, neat, and delicate. SERM. I.

XIV. Wiſdom diſcovers our relations, duties, and concernments, in reſpect of men, with the natural grounds of them; thereby both qualifying and inclining us to the diſcharge of them: whence exceeding convenience, pleaſure, and content enſues. By it we underſtand we are parts and members of the great body, the univerſe; and are therefore concerned in the good management of it, and are thereby obliged to procure its order and peace, and by no irregular undertaking to diſturb or diſcompoſe it; which makes us honeſt and peaceable men: that we proceed from the ſame primitive ſtock, are children of the ſame father, and partake of the ſame blood with all men; are endowed with like faculties of mind, paſſions of ſoul, ſhape of body, and ſenſe of things: that we have equally implanted in our original conſtitution inclinations to love, pity, gratitude, ſociableneſs, quiet, joy, reputation: that we have an indiſpenſable need and impatient deſire of company, aſſiſtance, comfort, and relief; that therefore it is according to the deſign of nature, and agreeable to reaſon, that to thoſe, to whom our natural condition by ſo many bands of cognation, ſimilitude, and mutual neceſſitude, hath knit and conjoined us, we ſhould bear a kind reſpect and

fully concur in undergoing the
heartily wiſh and induſtriouſly
them in accompliſhing their
requite the courteſies re-
and rejoice with them in
their diſtreſſes, and, as
tenderly compaſſion-
and ſorrows. This
neighbours, ſweet and
unto us the dreadful
arifing from breach of
the obligations of ſolemn pacts, in-
law, ariſing from the received rules
and interrupting good cor-
which conſiderations it en-
obedient ſubjects, juſt deal-
reminds us of the blindneſs, im-
to miſtake, and miſbe-
naturally is ſubject to; de-
than anger or hatred,
infirmities of our brethren,
inſenſible of petty affronts,
exorable, and reconcile-
greateſt cauſe of offence. It
but the evil of our neighbour
that from the ſuffering of
no benefit can accrue, nor
and that therefore it is a
thing, for any cauſe
the grief, pain, or mi-
him, or inſult over
proſecute revenge upon
and placable enemies.
Wiſdom is in effect
political virtue, juſtice.
perſon, *I lead in the*
the paths of judg-
the practice, how
the teſtimony of conti-

nual experience, and the unanimous conſent of all wiſe men ſufficiently declare. But farther, SERM. I.

XV. The principal advantage of Wiſdom is, its acquainting us with the nature and reaſon of true religion, and affording convictive arguments to perſuade to the practice of it; which is accompanied with the pureſt delight, and attended with the moſt ſolid content imaginable. I ſay, the nature of religion, wherein it conſiſts, and what it requires; the miſtake of which produceth daily ſo many miſchiefs and inconveniences in the world, and expoſes ſo good a name to ſo much reproach. It ſheweth it conſiſteth not in fair profeſſions and glorious pretences, but in real practice; not in a pertinacious adherence to any ſect or party, but in a ſincere love of goodneſs, and diſlike of naughtineſs, wherever diſcovering itſelf; not in vain oſtentations and flouriſhes of outward performance, but in an inward good complexion of mind, exerting itſelf in works of true devotion and charity; not in a nice orthodoxy, or politic ſubjection of our judgments to the peremptory dictates of men, but in a ſincere love of truth, in a hearty approbation of, and compliance with, the doctrines fundamentally good, and neceſſary to be believed; not in harſh cenſuring and virulently inveighing againſt others, but in careful amending our own ways; not in a peeviſh croſſneſs and obſtinate repugnancy to received laws and cuſtoms, but in a quiet and peaceable ſubmiſſion to the expreſs laws of God, and lawful commands of man; not in a furious zeal for or againſt trivial circumſtances, but in a conſcionable practiſing the ſubſtantial parts of religion; not in a frequent talking or contentious diſputing about it, but in a ready obſervance of the unqueſtionable rules and preſcripts of it: in a word, that religion conſiſts in nothing elſe but doing what becomes our relation to God, in a conformity or ſimilitude to his nature, and in a willing obedience to his holy will: to which by potent incentives it allures and perſuades us; by repreſenting to us his tranſcendently glorious attributes, conſpicuouſly diſplayed in the frame, order, and government of the world: that wonderful Power, which

SERM. I. erected this great and goodly fabric; that incomprehenſible Wiſdom, which preſerves it in a conſtant harmony; that immenſe Goodneſs, which hath ſo carefully provided for the various neceſſities, delights, and comforts of its innumerable inhabitants. I ſay, by repreſenting thoſe infinitely glorious perfections, it engages us with higheſt reſpect to eſteem, reverence, and honour him. Alſo, by minding us of our manifold obligations to him, our receiving being, life, reaſon, ſenſe, all the faculties, powers, excellencies, privileges, and commodities of our natures from him; of his tender care and loving providence continually ſupporting and protecting us; of his liberal beneficence, patient indulgence, and earneſt deſire of our good and happineſs, by manifold expreſſions evidently manifeſted toward us; it inflames us with ardent love, and obliges us to officious gratitude toward him. Alſo, by declaring the neceſſary and irreconcileable contrariety of his nature to all impurity and perverſeneſs, his peerleſs majeſty, his irreſiſtible power, and his all-ſeeing knowledge, it begets an awful dread and a devout fear of him. By diſcovering him from his infinite benignity willing, and from his unlimited power only able to ſupply our needs, relieve us in diſtreſſes, protect us from dangers, and confer any valuable benefit upon us, it engenders faith, and encourages us to rely upon him. By revealing to us his ſupereminent ſovereignty, uncontrolable dominion, and unqueſtionable authority over us; together with the admirable excellency, wiſdom, and equity of his laws, ſo juſt and reaſonable in themſelves, ſo ſuitable to our nature, ſo conducible to our good, ſo eaſy and practicable, ſo ſweet and comfortable; it powerfully inclines, and by a gentle force as it were conſtrains us to obedience. By ſuch efficacious inducements Wiſdom urges us to all duties of religion, and withal ſurely directs us (as I before ſaid) wherein it conſiſts; teaching us to have right and worthy apprehenſions of the divine nature, to which our devotion, if true and good, muſt be ſuited and conformed: and ſo it frees us, as from irreligion and profane neglect of God, ſo from fond ſuperſtitions, the ſources

of ſo much evil to mankind. For he that wiſely hath conſidered the wiſdom, goodneſs, and power of God, cannot imagine God can with a regardleſs eye overlook his preſumptuous contempts of his laws, or endure him to proceed in an outrageous defiance of Heaven, to continue hurting himſelf, or injuring his neighbour; nor can admit unreaſonable terrors, or entertain ſuſpicious conceits of God, as of an imperious maſter, or implacable tyrant over him, exacting impoſſible performances from, or delighting in the fatal miſeries of his creatures; nor can ſuppoſe him pleaſed with hypocritical ſhews, and greatly taken with ſuperficial courtſhips of ceremonious addreſs; or that he can in any wiſe favour our fiery zeals, fierce paſſions, or unjuſt partialities about matter of opinion and ceremony; or can do otherwiſe than deteſt all factious, harſh, uncharitable, and revengeful proceedings, of what nature, or upon what ground ſoever; or that he can be ſo inconſiſtent with himſelf, as to approve any thing but what is like himſelf, that is, righteouſneſs, ſincerity, and beneficence. SERM. I.

Laſtly, Wiſdom attracts the favour of God, purchaſeth a glorious reward, and ſecureth perpetual felicity to us. *For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wiſdom.* And, *Glorious is the fruit of good labours: and the root of wiſdom ſhall never fall away.* And, *Happy is the man that findeth wiſdom:* and, *Whoſo findeth* her, *findeth life, and ſhall obtain favour of the Lord.* Theſe are the words of wiſe Solomon, in the book of Wiſdom, and in the Proverbs. God loveth her, as moſt agreeable to his nature; as reſembling him; as an offspring, beam, and efflux of that Wiſdom which founded the earth, and eſtabliſhed the heavens; as that which begetteth honour, love, and obedience to his commands, and truly glorifies him; and as that which promotes the good of his creatures, which he earneſtly deſires. And the paths ſhe leads in are ſuch as directly tend to the promiſed inheritance of joy and bliſs. Wiſ. vii. 28. iii. 15. Prov. iii. 13. viii. 35.

Thus have I ſimply and plainly preſented you with part of what my meditation ſuggeſted upon this ſubject; it

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remains that we endeavour to obtain this excellent endowment of ſoul, by the faithful exerciſe of our reaſon, careful obſervation of things, diligent ſtudy of the divine law, watchful reflection upon ourſelves, virtuous and religious practice; but eſpecially, by imploring the divine influence, the original ſpring of light, and fountain of all true knowledge, following St. James's advice: *If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk it of God, who giveth freely.* Therefore, O everlaſting Wiſdom, the Maker, Redeemer, and Governor of all things, let ſome comfortable beams from thy great body of heavenly light deſcend upon us, to illuminate our dark minds, and quicken our dead hearts; to enflame us with ardent love unto thee, and to direct our ſteps in obedience to thy laws, through the gloomy ſhades of this world, into that region of eternal light and bliſs, where thou reigneſt in perfect glory and majeſty, one God ever bleſſed, world without end. Amen.

SERMON II.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 TIM. iv. 8.

——*But Godlineſs is profitable for all things.*

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HOW generally men, with moſt unanimous conſent, are devoted to profit, as to the immediate ſcope of their deſigns, and aim of their doings, if with the ſlighteſt attention we view what is acted upon this theatre of human affairs, we cannot but diſcern. All that we ſee men ſo very ſerious and induſtrious about, which we call buſineſs; that which they trudge for in the ſtreets, which they work or wait for in the ſhops, which they meet and crowd for at the exchange, which they ſue for in the hall, and ſolicit for at the court, which they plough and dig for, which they march and fight for in the field, which they travel for at land, and ſail for (among rocks and ſtorms) upon the ſea, which they plod for in the cloſet, and diſpute for in the ſchools, (yea, may we not add, which they frequently pray for and preach for in the Church?) what is it but profit? Is it not this apparently, for which men ſo eagerly conteſt and quarrel, ſo bitterly envy and emulate, ſo fiercely clamour and inveigh, ſo cunningly ſupplant and undermine one another; which ſtuffeth their hearts with mutual hatred and ſpite, which tippeth their tongues with ſlander and reproach, which often embrueth their hands with blood and ſlaughter; for which they expoſe their lives and limbs to danger, for

Prov. xiv. 23.
Φεῦ, δὺ ὀβολὼ ὡς μέγα δύνασθον πανταχοῦ.
Ariſtoph. Plut.

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which they undergo grievous toils and drudgeries, for which they diſtract their mind with cares, and *pierce their heart with ſorrows;* to which they ſacrifice their preſent eaſe and content, yea, to which commonly they proſtitute their honour and conſcience? This, if you mark it, is the great miſtreſs, which is with ſo paſſionate rivality every where wooed and courted; this is the common mark, which all eyes aim, and all endeavours ſtrike at; this the hire which men demand for all their pains, the prize they hope for all their combats, the harveſt they ſeek from all the year's aſſiduous labour. This is the bait, by which you may inveigle moſt men any whither; and the moſt certain ſign, by which you may prognoſticate what any man will do: for mark where his profit is, there will he be. This ſome profeſſedly and with open face, others ſlily and under thin veils of pretence, (under guiſe of friendſhip, of love to public good, of loyalty, of religious zeal;) ſome directly and in a plain track, others obliquely and by ſubtile trains; ſome by ſordid and baſe means, others in ways more cleanly and plauſible; ſome gravely and modeſtly, others wildly and furiouſly; all (very few excepted) in one manner or another, do clearly in moſt of their proceedings level and drive at [a].

This practice then being ſo general, and ſeeing that men are reaſonable creatures, that it is ſo cannot ſurely proceed from mere brutiſhneſs, or dotage; there muſt be ſome fair colour or ſemblance of reaſon, which draweth men into, and carrieth them forward in this way. The reaſon indeed is obvious and evident enough; the very name of profit implieth it, ſignifying that which is uſeful, or conducible to purpoſes really or ſeemingly good. The gain of money, or of ſomewhat equivalent thereto, is therefore ſpecially termed profit, becauſe it readily ſupplieth neceſſity, furniſheth convenience, feedeth pleaſure,

[a] Prima fere vota, et cunctis notiſſima templis,
Divitiæ ut creſcant, &c. *Juv. Sat.* x.

Omnes ad affectum atque appetitum utilitatis ſuæ naturæ ipſius magiſterio atque impulſione ducuntur. *Salv. ad Eccl. Cath.* 2.

ſatisfieth fancy and curioſity, promoteth eaſe and liberty, ſupporteth honour and dignity, procureth power, dependencies, and friendſhips, rendereth a man ſomebody conſiderable in the world; in fine, enableth to do good, or to perform works of beneficence and charity. Profit is therefore ſo much affected and purſued, becauſe it is, or doth ſeem, apt to procure or promote ſome good deſirable to us.

If therefore a project ſhould be propoſed to us very feaſible, and probable to ſucceed, in purſuance whereof aſſuredly we might obtain great profit; methinks, in conſiſtence with ourſelves, and conformably to our uſual manner of acting, we ſhould be very ready to embrace and execute it. Such a project it is, which in my text, by a very truſty voucher and ſkilful judge of ſuch things, and one who had himſelf fully experimented it, is propoſed; which in itſelf is very practicable, ſo that any of us may, if we have a mind to it, and will be at the pains, throughly compaſs and carry it on: which will exceedingly turn to account, and bring in gains unto us unſpeakably vaſt; in compariſon whereto all other deſigns, which men with ſo much care and toil do purſue, are very unprofitable or detrimental, yielding but ſhadows of profit, or bringing real damage to us.

It is briefly this, to be religious or pious; that is, in our minds ſteadfaſtly to believe on God, (ſuch as nature in ſome meaſure, and revelation more clearly, declareth him,) in our hearts earneſtly to love and reverence him, through all our practice ſincerely and diligently to obſerve his laws. This is it which St. Paul affirmeth to be *profitable for all things*, and which it is my intent, by God's help, to recommend unto you as ſuch; demonſtrating it really to be ſo, by repreſenting ſome of thoſe numberleſs benefits and advantages which accrue from it, extending to all conditions and capacities of men, to all ſtates, all ſeaſons, and in effect to all affairs of life.

It hath been ever a main obſtruction to the practice of piety, that it hath been taken for no friend, or rather for an enemy, to profit; as both unprofitable and prejudicial

SERM. II. to its followers: and many ſemblances there are countenancing that opinion. For religion ſeemeth to ſmother or to ſlacken the induſtry and alacrity of men in following profit, many ways: by charging them to be content with a little, and careful for nothing; by diverting their affections and cares from worldly affairs to matters of another nature, place, and time, preſcribing in the firſt place to ſeek things ſpiritual, heavenly, and future; by diſparaging all ſecular wealth, as a thing, in compariſon to virtue and ſpiritual goods, very mean and inconſiderable; by checking greedy deſires and aſpiring thoughts after it; by debarring the moſt ready ways of getting it, (violence, exaction, fraud, and flattery,) yea, ſtraitening the beſt ways, eager care and diligence; by commending ſtrict juſtice in all caſes, and always taking part with conſcience when it claſheth with intereſt; by paring away the largeſt uſes of wealth, in the prohibition of its free enjoyment to pride or pleaſure; by enjoining liberal communication thereof in ways of charity and mercy; by engaging men to expoſe their goods ſometimes to imminent hazard, ſometimes to certain loſs; obliging them to forſake all things, and to embrace poverty for its ſake.

It favoureth this conceit, to obſerve, that often bad men by impious courſes do appear to thrive and proſper; while good men ſeem for their goodneſs to ſuffer, or to be no wiſe viſibly better for it, enduring much hardſhip and diſtreſs.

It furthereth the prejudice, that ſome perſons, void of true piety, or imperfectly good, (ſome *dabblers* in religion,) do not from their lame, ſlight, and ſuperficial performances, feel ſatisfactory returns, ſuch as they did preſume to find; and thence, to the defamation of piety, are apt to ſay, with thoſe men in the Prophet, *It is vain to ſerve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hoſts?* Yea, that ſometimes very pious men, being out of humour, and ſomewhat diſcompoſed by the urgent preſſures of affliction, the diſappointments and croſſes incident to all men here in this region of trouble, are apt to

Mal. iii. 14.

complain and expreſs themſelves diſſatisfied, ſaying with Job, *It profiteth a man nothing that he ſhould delight himſelf with God. What advantage will it be unto me, and what profit ſhall I have, if I be cleanſed from my ſin?* or with David, *Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency: for all the day long I have been plagued, and chaſtened every morning.* SERM. II. Job xxxiv. 9. xxxv. 3. Pſ. lxxiii. 13, 14.

To theſe conſiderations, diſadvantageous in this reſpect to piety, may be added, that the conſtant and certain profits emergent from it (although incomparably more ſubſtantial, and to the mind more ſenſible than any other) are not yet ſo groſs and palpable, that men, who from being immerſed in earth and fleſh are blind in error, dull of apprehenſion, vain and inconſiderate in their judgments, tainted and vitiated in their palates, can diſcern their worth, or reliſh their ſweetneſs. Hence it is that ſo many follow the judgment and practice of thoſe in Job, *who ſay unto God, Depart from us; for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhould we have, if we pray unto him?* Job xxi. 14, 15.

For voiding which prejudices, and the recommendation of St. Paul's project, I ſhall, as I ſaid, propoſe ſome of thoſe innumerable advantages, by conſidering which the immenſe profitableneſs of piety will appear. And firſt, I ſhall mention thoſe conſiderations, which more plainly do import univerſality; then ſhall touch ſome benefits thereof, ſeeming more particular, yet in effect vaſtly large, and of a very diffuſive influence.

I. Firſt then, we may conſider, that piety is exceeding uſeful for all ſorts of men, in all capacities, all ſtates, all relations; fitting and diſpoſing them to manage all their reſpective concernments, to diſcharge all their peculiar duties, in a proper, juſt, and decent manner.

It rendereth all ſuperiors equal and moderate in their adminiſtrations; mild, courteous, and affable in their converſe; benign and condeſcenſive in all their demeanour toward their inferiors. Eph. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1.

Correſpondently it diſpoſeth inferiors to be ſincere and Eph. vi. 5.

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faithful, modeſt, loving, reſpectful, diligent, apt willingly to yield due ſubjection and ſervice.

Col. iii. 22. 1 Pet. ii. 18. It inclineth princes to be juſt, gentle, benign, careful for their ſubjects' good, apt to adminiſter juſtice uprightly, to protect right, to encourage virtue, to check wickedneſs.

Rom. xiii. 1. Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 9. Phil. ii. 14. Anſwerably it rendereth ſubjects loyal, ſubmiſſive, obedient, quiet, and peaceable, ready to yield due honour, to pay the tributes and bear the burdens impoſed, to diſcharge all duties, and obſerve all laws preſcribed by their governors, conſcionably, patiently, cheerfully, without reluctancy, grudging, or murmuring.

Eph. vi. 4. Col. iii. 21. 1 Tim. v. 8. Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20. It maketh parents loving, gentle, provident for their children's good education, and comfortable ſubſiſtence; children again, dutiful, reſpectful, grateful, apt to requite their parents.

Eph. v. 25. Col. iii. 19. 1 Pet. iii. 7. Eph. v. 22. Huſbands from it become affectionate and compliant to their wives; wives ſubmiſſive and obedient to their huſbands.

Col. iii. 18. Tit. ii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 5. It diſpoſeth friends to be friends indeed, full of cordial affection and good-will, entirely faithful, firmly conſtant, induſtriouſly careful and active in performing all good offices mutually.

It engageth men to be diligent in their calling, faithful to their truſts, contented and peaceable in their ſtation, and thereby ſerviceable to public good.

Gal. vi. 2. 10. Phil. iv. 8. 1 Theſſ. iii. 12. 2 Cor. ix. 13. It rendereth all men juſt and punctual in their dealing, orderly and quiet in their behaviour, courteous and complaiſant in their converſation, friendly and charitable upon all occaſions, apt to aſſiſt, to relieve, to comfort one another.

It tieth all relations more faſtly and ſtrongly, aſſureth and augmenteth all endearments, enforceth and eſtabliſheth all obligations by the firm bands of conſcience; ſet aſide which, no engagement can hold ſure againſt temptations of intereſt or pleaſure. Much difference there is between performing theſe duties out of natural temper, fear of puniſhment, hope of temporal reward, ſelfiſh deſign, regard to credit, or other the like principles, and the diſcharging them out of religious conſcience: this alone will

keep men tight, uniform, reſolute, and ſtable; whereas all other principles are looſe and ſlippery, will ſoon be ſhaken and falter. SERM. II.

In conſequence to thoſe practices ſpringing from it, piety removeth oppreſſion, violence, faction, diſorders, and murmurings, out of the ſtate; ſchiſms and ſcandals out of the church; pride and haughtineſs, ſloth and luxury, detraction and ſycophantry, out of the court; corruption and partiality out of judicatures; clamours and tumults out of the ſtreet; brawlings, grudges, and jealouſies out of families; extortion and cozenage out of trade; ſtrifes, emulations, ſlanderous backbitings, bitter and foul language, out of converſation: in all places, in all ſocieties it produceth, it advanceth, it eſtabliſheth, order, peace, ſafety, proſperity, all that is good, all that is lovely or handſome, all that is convenient or pleaſant for human ſociety and common life. It is that which, as the Wiſe Man ſaith, *exalteth a nation;* it is that which *eſtabliſheth a throne.* Prov. xiv. 34. xvi. 12. xx. 28. xxix. 14.

It is indeed the beſt prop and guard that can be of government, and of the commonweal: for it ſettleth the body politic in a ſound conſtitution of health, it firmly cementeth the parts thereof; it putteth all things into a right order and ſteady courſe. It procureth mutual reſpect and affection between governors and ſubjects, whence ariſeth ſafety, eaſe, and pleaſure to both. It rendereth men truly good, (that is, juſt and honeſt, ſober and conſiderate, modeſt and peaceable,) and thence apt, without any conſtraint or ſtir, to yield every one their due; not affected to needleſs change, not diſpoſed to raiſe any diſturbance. It putteth men in good humour, and keepeth them in it; whence things paſs ſmoothly and pleaſantly. It cheriſheth worth, and encourageth induſtry; whence virtue flouriſheth, and wealth is increaſed; whence the occaſions and means of diſorder are ſtopped, the pretences for ſedition and faction are cut off. In fine, it certainly procureth the benediction of God, the ſource of all welfare and proſperity: whence, *When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth;* and, *When the righteous are* viii. 15. xxix. 6. Prov. xi. 10. xxix. 2.

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It is therefore the concernment of all men, who, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh, *deſire to live well, and would fain ſee good days;* it is the ſpecial intereſt of great perſons, (of the magiſtracy, the nobility, the gentry, of all perſons that have any conſiderable intereſt in the world,) who would ſafely and ſweetly enjoy their dignity, power, or wealth, by all means to protect and promote piety, as the beſt inſtrument of their ſecurity, and undiſturbedly enjoying the accommodations of their ſtate. 'Tis in all reſpects their beſt wiſdom and policy; that which will as well preſerve their outward ſtate here, as ſatisfy their conſciences within, and ſave their ſouls hereafter. All the Machiavelian arts and tricks, all the ſleights and fetches of worldly craft, do ſignify nothing in compariſon to this one plain and eaſy way of ſecuring and furthering their intereſts.

Pſal. xxxiv. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 10.

If then it be a groſs abſurdity to deſire the fruits, and not to take care of the root, not to cultivate the ſtock, whence they ſprout; if every prince gladly would have his ſubjects loyal and obedient, every maſter would have his ſervants honeſt, diligent, and obſervant, every parent would have his children officious and grateful, every man would have his friend faithful and kind, every one would have thoſe juſt and ſincere, with whom he doth negociate or converſe; if any one would chooſe to be related to ſuch, and would eſteem their relation a happineſs; then conſequently ſhould every man in reaſon ſtrive to further piety, from whence alone thoſe good diſpoſitions and practices do proceed.

II. Piety doth fit a man for all conditions, qualifying him to paſs through them all with the beſt advantage, wiſely, cheerfully, and ſafely; ſo as to incur no conſiderable harm or detriment by them.

Is a man proſperous, high, or wealthy in condition? Piety guardeth him from all the miſchiefs incident to that ſtate, and diſpoſeth him to enjoy the beſt advantages thereof. It keepeth him from being ſwelled and puffed up with vain conceit, from being tranſported with fond

complacence or confidence therein; minding him, that it is purely the gift of God, that it abſolutely dependeth on his diſpoſal, ſo that it may ſoon be taken from him; and that he cannot otherwiſe than by humility, by gratitude, by the good uſe of it, be ſecure to retain it; minding him alſo, that he ſhall aſſuredly be forced to render a ſtrict account concerning the good management thereof. It preſerveth him from being perverted or corrupted with the temptations, to which that condition is moſt liable; from luxury, from ſloth, from ſtupidity, from forgetfulneſs of God, and of himſelf; maintaining among the floods of plenty a ſober and ſteady mind. It fenceth him from inſolence, and faſtuous contempt of others; rendereth him civil, condeſcenſive, kind and helpful to thoſe who are in a meaner ſtate. It inſtructeth and inciteth him to apply his wealth and power to the beſt uſes, to the ſervice of God, to the benefit of his neighbour, for his own beſt reputation, and moſt ſolid comfort. It is the right ballaſt of proſperity, the only antidote for all the inconveniences of wealth; that which ſecureth, ſweeteneth, and ſanctifieth all other goods: without it all apparent goods are very noxious, or extremely dangerous; riches, power, honour, eaſe, pleaſure, are ſo many poiſons, or ſo many ſnares, without it. Again, is a man poor and low in the world? Piety doth improve and ſweeten even that ſtate: it keepeth his ſpirits up above dejection, deſperation, and diſconſolateneſs; it freeth him from all grievous ſolicitude and anxiety; ſhewing him, that although he ſeemeth to have little, yet he may be aſſured to want nothing, he having a certain ſuccour and never-failing ſupply from God's good providence; that, notwithſtanding the preſent ſtraitneſs of his condition, or ſcantneſs of outward things, he hath a title to goods infinitely more precious and more conſiderable. A pious man cannot but apprehend himſelf like the child of a moſt wealthy, kind, and careful father, who, although he hath yet nothing in his own poſſeſſion, or paſſing under his name, yet is aſſured, that he can never come into any want of what is needful to him: the Lord of all things (who hath all things in heaven and earth at his diſpoſal,

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who is infinitely tender of his children's good, who doth inceſſantly watch over them) being his gracious Father, how can he fear to be left deſtitute, or not to be competently provided for, as is truly beſt for him?

This is the difference between a pious and an impious man. Is the pious man in need? he hath then an inviſible refuge to fly to, an inviſible ſtore to furniſh him; he hath ſomewhat beyond all preſent things to hope in, to comfort himſelf with: whereas the impious perſon hath nothing beſide preſent appearances to ſupport or ſolace himſelf by; the which failing, down he ſinketh into dejection and deſpair. Is the good man in affliction? he knoweth that it cometh not on him without God's wiſe appointment, nor without good intention toward him, for probation, exerciſe, and improvement of his virtues, or for wholeſome correction of his bad diſpoſitions; that it is only phyſic and diſcipline to him, which ſhall have a comfortable iſſue; that it ſhall laſt no longer than it is expedient for him that it ſhould: wherefore he patiently ſubmitteth to it, and undergoeth it cheerfully, with the ſame mind wherewith a patient ſwalloweth down an unſavoury potion, which he preſumeth will conduce to his health [b]. Never, indeed, hath any man enjoyed more real content, or hath been more truly ſatisfied, than good men have been in a ſeeming depth of adverſity. What men ever upon earth have been more ſorely afflicted, have underwent greater loſſes, diſgraces, labours, troubles, diſtreſſes in any kind, than did the holy Apoſtles? Yet did they moſt heartily rejoice, exult, and triumph in them all [c]. Such a wondrous virtue hath piety to change all things into matter of conſolation and joy. No condition in effect can be evil or ſad to a pious man: his very ſorrows are pleaſant, his

[b] Scimus amicos Dei ab amantiſſimo, miſericordiſſimo Patre Deo mala iſta pœnalia recipere, non ut pœnam ſeu vindictam iracundiæ, ſed magis ut correctiones et medicamenta ſtultitiæ, et adjumenta virtutis, ut malleationes ſive fabricationes, et tunſiones, ſive ablutiones, et candidationes. *Guil. Par. de Sacram.*

[c] Ἐκείνους μὲν γὰρ ὑπερνοήσειν ἡ χαρὰ τῆς μαρτυρίας, καὶ ἡ ἡδονὴ τῶν ὑπηγγελμένων, καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγάπη, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ παρηγορικόν. *Euſeb.* v. 1. Mart. Lugd.

infirmities are wholesome, his wants enrich him, his disgraces adorn him, his burdens ease him; his duties are privileges, his falls are the grounds of advancement, his very sins (as breeding contrition, humility, circumspection, and vigilance) do better and profit him: whereas impiety doth spoil every condition, doth corrupt and embase all good things, doth embitter all the conveniences and comforts of life.

III. Piety doth virtually comprise within it all other profits, serving all the designs of them all: whatever kind of desirable good we can hope to find from any other profit, we may be assured to enjoy from it.

He that hath it is *ipso facto* vastly rich, is intitled to immense treasures of most precious wealth; in comparison whereto all the gold and all the jewels in the world are mere baubles. He hath interest in God, and can call him his, who is the *all*, and in regard to whom all things existent are *less than nothing*. The infinite power and wisdom of God belong to him, to be ever, upon all fit occasions, employed for his benefit. All the inestimable treasures of heaven (a place infinitely more rich than the Indies) are his, after this moment of life, to have and to hold for ever: so that great reason had the Wise Man to say, that *In the house of the righteous is much treasure.* Prov. xv. 6. Piety therefore is profitable, as immediately instating in wealth: and whereas the desired fruits of profit are chiefly these, honour, power, pleasure, safety, liberty, ease, opportunity of getting knowledge, means of benefiting others; all these, we shall see, do abundantly accrue from piety, and in truth only from it.

The pious man is in truth most honourable. *Inter homines pro summo est optimus*, saith Seneca; whom Solomon translateth thus; *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.* Prov. xii. 26. He is dignified by the most illustrious titles, a son of God, a friend and favourite to the sovereign King of the world, an heir of heaven, a denizen of the Jerusalem above: titles far surpassing all those which worldly state doth assume. He is approved by the best and most infallible judgments, wherein true honour resideth.

Sen. Ep. xc.

Κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὁ ἀγαθὸς μόνος τιμητός. *Aristot. Eth.* iii. 3.

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He is reſpected by God himſelf, by the holy angels, by the bleſſed ſaints, by all good and all wiſe perſons; yea, commonly, by all men: for the effects of genuine piety are ſo venerable and amiable, that ſcarce any man can do otherwiſe than in his heart much eſteem him that worketh them.

Prov. xii. 8, 4.

The pious man is alſo the moſt potent man: he hath a kind of omnipotency, becauſe he can do whatever he will, that is, what he ought to do[d]; and becauſe the Divine Power is ever ready to aſſiſt him in his pious enterpriſes, ſo that *he can do all things by Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth him.* He is able to combat and vanquiſh him that is ὁ ἰσχυρὸς, *the ſtout and mighty one;* to wage war with happy ſucceſs *againſt principalities and powers.* He conquereth and commandeth himſelf, which is the braveſt victory and nobleſt empire: he quelleth fleſhly luſts, ſubdueth inordinate paſſions, and repelleth ſtrong temptations. He, *by his faith, overcometh the world* with a conqueſt far more glorious than ever any Alexander or Cæſar could do. He, in fine, doth perform the moſt worthy exploits, and deſerveth the moſt honourable triumphs that man can do.

Prov. xvi. 32. xxv. 28. Vide Sen. de Ben. v. 7.

The pious man alſo doth enjoy the only true pleaſures; hearty, pure, ſolid, durable pleaſures; ſuch pleaſures as thoſe, of which the divine Pſalmiſt ſingeth: *In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy; at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.* That *all joy in believing*, that *gaiety of hope*, that inceſſant *rejoicing in the Lord*, and *greatly delighting in his law*, that continual feaſt of a good conſcience, that *ſerving the Lord with gladneſs*, that *exceeding gladneſs with God's countenance*, that *comfort of the Holy Spirit*, that *joy unſpeakable and full of glory;* the ſatisfaction reſulting from the contemplation of heavenly truth, from the ſenſe of God's favour, and the pardon of his ſins, from the influence of God's grace, from the hopes and anticipation of everlaſting bliſs; theſe are pleaſures

Pſ. xvi. 11. Rom. xv. 13. Heb. iii. 6. Phil. iv. 4. Pſ. xliii. 4. cxii. 1. i. 2. cxix. 16. 24. 47. 70. 77. 92. 111. 143. c. 2. xxi. 6. xciv. 19. Iſ. xxix. 19. John xvi. 20, &c. 1 Pet. i. 8. Rom. xiv. 17.

[d] Tantum quantum vult poteſt, qui ſe niſi quod debet non putat poſſe. *Senec. Ep.* xc.

indeed, in compariſon whereto all other pleaſures are no more than brutiſh ſenſualities, ſordid impurities, ſuperficial touches, tranſient flaſhes of delight: ſuch as ſhould be inſipid and unſavoury to a rational appetite; ſuch as are tinctured with ſourneſs and bitterneſs, have painful remorſes or qualms conſequent[e]. All the pious man's performances of duty and of devotion are full of pure ſatisfaction and delight here, they ſhall be rewarded with perfect and endleſs joy hereafter. SERM. II.

As for ſafety, the pious man hath it moſt abſolute and ſure; he being guarded by Almighty power and wiſdom; *reſting under the ſhadow of God's wings;* God *upholding him with his hand, ordering his ſteps, ſo that none of them ſhall ſlide, holding his ſoul in life, and ſuffering not his feet to be moved;* he being, by the grace and mercy of God, ſecured from the aſſaults and impreſſions of all enemies, from ſin and guilt, from the Devil, world, and fleſh, from death and hell, which are our moſt formidable, and in effect only dangerous enemies. Pſ. xvii. 8. xxxvi. 7. lvii. 1. lxi. 4. xci. 4. xxxvii. 24. cxix. 117. xxxvii. 23. 31. cxix. 133. lxvi. 9. cxix. 45.

As for liberty, the pious man moſt entirely and truly doth enjoy that; he alone is free from captivity to that cruel tyrant Satan, from the miſerable ſlavery to ſin, from the grievous dominion of luſt and paſſion. He can do what he pleaſeth, having a mind to do only what is good and fit. The Law he obſerveth is worthily called *the perfect law of liberty;* the Lord he ſerveth pretendeth only to command freemen and friends: *Ye are my friends,* ſaid he, *if ye do whatever I command you;* and, *If the Son ſet you free, then are ye free indeed.* Jam. i. 25. John xv. 14. viii. 36. Οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἐκ ἔστιν ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλ' ἡ μόνος ὁ Χριστῷ ζῶν. *Chryſoſt. ad Theod.*

And for eaſe, it is he only that knoweth it; having his mind exempted from the diſtraction of care, from diſorder of paſſion, from anguiſh of conſcience, from the drudgeries and troubles of the world, from the vexations and diſquiets which ſin produceth. He findeth it made good to

[e] Quid enim jucundius, quam Dei Patris et Domini reconciliatio, quam veritatis revelatio, quam errorum recognitio, quam tot retro criminum venia? quæ major voluptas, quam faſtidium ipſius voluptatis, quam ſæculi totius contemptus, quam vera libertas, quam conſcientia integra, quam vita ſufficiens, quam mortis timor nullus, &c.? *Tert. de Spectac.* 29.

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him, which our Lord inviting him did promiſe, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt:* he feeleth the truth of thoſe divine aſſertions, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee;* and, *Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them.*

Matt. xi. 28. Iſ. xxvi. 3. Pſ. cxix. 165.

As for knowledge, the pious man alone doth attain it conſiderably, ſo as to become truly wiſe and learned to purpoſe. *Evil men,* ſaith the Wiſe Man himſelf, who knew well, *underſtand not judgment: but they that ſeek the Lord underſtand all things.* It is the pious man that employeth his mind upon the moſt proper and worthy objects, that knoweth things which certainly beſt deſerve to be known, that hath his ſoul enriched with the choiceſt notions; he ſkilleth to aim at the beſt ends, and to compaſs them by the fitteſt means; he can aſſign to each thing its due worth and value; he can proſecute things by the beſt methods, and order his affairs in the beſt manner: ſo that he is ſure not to be defeated or diſappointed in his endeavours, nor to miſſpend his care and pains, without anſwerable fruit. He hath the beſt maſter to inſtruct him in his ſtudies, and the beſt rules to direct him in his proceedings: he cannot be miſtaken, ſeeing in his judgment and choice of things he conſpireth with infallible wiſdom. Therefore ὁ εὐσεβὼν ἄκρως φιλοσοφεῖ, *the pious man is the exquiſite philoſopher. The fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom; and to depart from evil is underſtanding. The fear of the Lord* (as is ſaid again and again in Scripture) *is the head* (or *top*) *of wiſdom. A good underſtanding have all they that keep his commandments.*

Prov. xxviii. 5. Triſmeg. Job xxviii. 28. Prov. ix. 10. i. 7. Pſal. cxi. 10. cxix. 34. 99. 104. 130.

Farther: the pious man is enabled and diſpoſed (hath the power and the heart) moſt to benefit and oblige others. He doth it by his ſuccour and aſſiſtance, by his inſtruction and advice, which he is ever ready to yield to any man upon fit occaſion: he doth it by the direction and encouragement of his good example: he doth it by his conſtant and earneſt prayers for all men: he doth it by drawing down bleſſings from heaven on the place where he reſideth. He is upon all accounts the moſt true, the moſt common

benefactor to mankind; all his neighbours, his country, the world are in ſome way or other obliged to him: at leaſt, he doth all the good he can, and in wiſh doth benefit all men. SERM. II.

Thus all the fruits and conſequences of profit, the which engage men ſo eagerly to purſue it, do in the beſt kind and higheſt degree reſult from piety, and indeed only from it. All the philoſophical bravados concerning a wiſe man being only rich, only honourable, only happy, only above fortune, are verified in the pious man: to him alone, as ſuch, with a ſure foundation, without vanity, with evident reaſon, thoſe aphoriſms may be applied. They are paradoxes and fictions abſtracting from religion, or conſidering men only under the light and power of nature: but ſuppoſing our religion true, a good Chriſtian ſoberly, without arrogance, in proportion and according to the meaſure of his piety, may aſſume them to himſelf, as the holy Apoſtles did: *I poſſeſs all things, I can do all things*, he may in a ſort ſay after St. Paul.

As for all other profits, ſecluding it, they are but imaginary and counterfeit, mere ſhadows and illuſions, yielding only painted ſhows inſtead of ſubſtantial fruit. Sen. Ep. 59.

If from bare worldly wealth (that which uſurpeth the name of profit here) a man ſeeketh honour, he is deluded, for he is not thereby truly honourable; he is but a ſhining earth-worm, a well-trapped aſs, a gaudy ſtatue, a theatrical grandee: with God, who judgeth moſt rightly, he is mean and deſpicable: no intelligent perſon can inwardly reſpect him. Even here, in this world of fallacy and dotage, the wiſeſt and ſobereſt men, whoſe judgment uſually doth ſway that of others, cannot but contemn him, as maſter of no real good, nor fit for any good purpoſe; as ſeeing that in the end he will prove moſt beggarly and wretched.

If a man affecteth power thence, he is grievouſly miſtaken: for, inſtead thereof, he proveth exceedingly feeble and impotent, able to perform nothing worthy a man, ſubject to fond humours and paſſions, ſervant to divers luſts and pleaſures, *captivated by the Devil at his pleaſure*,

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overborne by temptation, hurried by the ſtream of the world, and liable to the ſtrokes of fortune.

If he propoundeth to himſelf thence the enjoyment of pleaſure, he will alſo much fail therein: for in lieu thereof he ſhall find care and trouble, ſurfeiting and diſeaſe, wearifome ſatiety and bitter regret; being void of all true delight in his mind, ſatisfaction in his conſcience; nothing here being able to furniſh ſolid and ſtable pleaſure.

If he fancieth ſafety, he deludeth himſelf: for how can he be ſafe, who is deſtitute of God's protection and ſuccour; who is the object of Divine wrath and vengeance; who is aſſailed by many fierce and powerful enemies; whom the roaring lion is ready to devour; whom death and *ſudden deſtruction* are coming to ſeize upon; whom guilt threateneth, and hell gapeth for; who without any guard or fence ſtandeth expoſed to ſuch imminent, ſuch horrid and ghaſtly dangers?

1 Theſſ. v. 3. Prov. x. 29.

If he thirſt for liberty, he will be fruſtrated: for he can be no otherwiſe than a ſlave, while he continueth impious; *ſervus tot dominorum, quot vitiorum, a ſlave to ſo many maſters as he keepeth vices:* a ſlave to himſelf and his own luſts: carrying about with him the fetters of unſatiable deſire, being hampered with inconſiſtent and irregular affections.

Auguſt. Prov. xxv. 28.

Eaſe he cannot obtain, being oppreſſed with unwieldy burdens of ſin, of care, of trouble; being toſſed with reſtleſs agitations of luſt and paſſion; being *like the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.*

Iſa. lvii. 20.

If he meaneth to get wiſdom, he is out: for wiſdom and impiety are incompatible things. All his knowledge is vain, all his ſpeculations are no better than dreams, ſeeing he erreth in the main point, and is *not wiſe to ſalvation.*

He is, in fine, extremely miſtaken, and in all his projects will be lamentably diſappointed, whoever fancieth any true profit without piety: he never can attain to be ſo much as wealthy; but drudge and plod what he can,

muſt be a beggar, and a forlorn wretch. For how can he be any wiſe rich, who doth want all the beſt things, the only valuable things in the world, which any man may have, which any good man doth poſſeſs? How can he be rich, who is deſtitute of the moſt needful accommodations of life; who conſtantly feedeth on the coarſeſt and moſt ſordid fare, (the duſt of pelf, the dung of ſenſuality;) who hath no faithful or conſtant friends, (nothing earthly can be ſuch;) who is maſter of nothing but dirt, or chaff, or ſmoke? Whereas alſo riches do conſiſt, not in what one enjoyeth at preſent, (for that can be little,) but in a preſumed ability to enjoy afterward what he may come to need or deſire; or in well-grounded hopes that he ſhall never fall into want or diſtreſs. How can that man be rich, who hath not any confidence in God, any intereſt in him, any reaſon to expect his bleſſing? yea, who hath much ground to fear the diſpleaſure of him, in whoſe hand all things are, and who arbitrarily diſpoſeth of all? Piety therefore is the only profitable thing, according to juſt eſteem. *She is more precious than rubies, and all the things we can deſire are not to be compared to her.* Upon this account it is moſt true, what the Pſalmiſt affirmeth, *A little that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly.* Prov. iii. 15. Pſ. xxxvii. 16.

IV. That commendation is not to be omitted, which is neareſt at hand, and ſuggeſted by St. Paul himſelf to back this aſſertion concerning the univerſal profitableneſs of piety; *For*, ſaith he, *it hath the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:* that is, God hath promiſed to reward it with bleſſings appertaining to this mortal life, and with thoſe which concern the future eternal ſtate.

As for the bleſſings of this life, although God hath not promiſed to load the godly man with affluence of worldly things, not to put him into a ſplendid and pompous garb, not to diſpenſe to him that which may ſerve for pampering the fleſh, or gratifying wanton fancy, not to exempt him from all the inconveniences to which human nature and this worldly ſtate are ſubject; yet hath he promiſed

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to furniſh him with whatever is needful or convenient for him, in due meaſure and ſeaſon, the which he doth beſt underſtand. There is no good thing which a man naturally deſireth, or reaſonably can wiſh for, which is not in expreſs terms propoſed as a reward, or a reſult of piety.

Prov. x. 6. Deut. xxviii. 8. xxx. 9. Pſ. lxxxiv. 11. Eccleſ. viii. 12. Iſa. iii. 10. Pſ. cxxviii. 1, 2. (Prov. viii. 35.) Prov. xii. 21. Rom. viii. 28.

In general, it is declared, that *Bleſſings are upon the head of the juſt*; that, *No good thing God will withhold from them that walk uprightly*; that, whatever otherwiſe doth fall out, it *aſſuredly ſhall be well with them that fear God*; that, *Bleſſed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways:—happy ſhalt thou be, and it ſhall be well with thee*; that, *There ſhall no evil happen to the juſt*; that, *All things work together for good to them that love God.*

Particularly, there are promiſed to the pious man,

Prov. x. 3. Prov xiii. 25. Pſ. xxxiv. 9, 10. xxxiii. 19.

A ſupply of all wants. *The Lord will not ſuffer the ſoul of the righteous to famiſh. The righteous eateth to the ſatisfying of his ſoul. There is no want to them that fear God. The young lions do lack, and ſuffer hunger; but they that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing.*

xxxvii. 3, 19. xxxiii. 18. xxxiv. 20. cxii. 7. xxxvii. 28. xci. 10, 11.

A protection in all dangers. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their ſoul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. There ſhall no evil befal thee, neither ſhall any plague come nigh thy dwelling: He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

Guidance in all his undertakings and proceedings.

Pſ. xxxvii. 23, &c. Prov. iii. 6. (Prov. xi. 3. 5. xvi. 3.)

The ſteps of a good man are ordered by the Lord——none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide.——In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths.

Pſ. xxxvii. 5. Pſ. i. 3. Job xxii. 28. Deut. xxviii. 8. 12. Prov. xxiii. 18.

Succeſs and proſperity in his deſigns. *Commit thy way unto the Lord; truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.——Whatſoever he doeth, it ſhall proſper.——Thou ſhalt decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed; and the light ſhall ſhine upon thy ways. The Lord ſhall command a bleſſing upon thee in thy ſtorehouſes, and in all that thou ſetteſt thine hand unto. Thine expectation ſhall not be cut off.*

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Comfortable enjoying the fruits of his induſtry.—*Thou ſhalt eat the labour of thine hands.*

Satisfaction of all reaſonable deſires. *The deſire of the righteous ſhall be granted. Delight thyſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thine heart. He will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him: he will hear their cry, and will ſave them.* Pſ. cxxviii. 2. Prov. x. 24. Pſ. xxxvii. 4. cxlv. 19.

Firm peace and quiet. *The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace; and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever. Great peace have they which love thy law. The fruit of righteouſneſs is ſowed in peace.* Iſa. xxxii. 17. Pſal. cxix. 165. James iii. 18.

Joy and alacrity. *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart. In the tranſgreſſion of an evil man there is a ſnare: but the righteous doth ſing and rejoice.* Pſal. xcvii. 11. Prov. xxix. 6.

Support and comfort in afflictions. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. Be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.* Pſ. cxlvii. 3. Pſal. xxxi. 24. xxvii. 14.

Deliverance from trouble. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.* Pſ. xxxiv. 19. xxxvii. 39.

Preſervation and recovery from miſhaps, or miſcarriages. *Though he fall, he ſhall not be utterly caſt down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* Pſ. xxxvii. 34.

Preferment of all ſorts, to honour and dignity, to wealth and proſperity. *Wait upon the Lord, and keep his way; and he ſhall exalt thee to inherit the land. By humility and fear of the Lord are riches and honour. Bleſſed is the man that feareth the Lord——wealth and riches are in his houſe. The upright ſhall have good things in poſſeſſion. If they obey and ſerve him, they ſhall ſpend their days in proſperity, and their years in pleaſure. The tabernacle of the righteous ſhall flouriſh.* Pſ. xxxvii. 34. Prov. xxii. 4. Pſ. cxii. 1. 3. Prov. xxviii. 10. Job xxxvi. 7.) Job xxxvi. 11.

Long life. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days. By me thy days ſhall be multiplied, and the years of thy life ſhall be increaſed. Let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, ſhall they add unto thee.* Prov. xiv. 11. Prov. x. 27. ix. 11. iii. 1. 2. 16.

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A good name enduring after death. *The memory of the juſt is bleſſed.*

Prov. x. 7. Bleſſings entailed on poſterity. *His ſeed ſhall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright ſhall be bleſſed.* Pſ. xxxvii. 25. cxii. 2. *The root of the righteous ſhall not be moved.* (Exod. xx. 6.)

Thus is a liberal diſpenſation even of temporal goods annexed by God's infallible word unto the practice of piety. It is indeed more frequently, abundantly, and explicitly promiſed unto God's ancient people, as being a conditional ingredient of the covenant made with them, exhibited in that as a recompence of their external performance of religious works preſcribed in their Law. The Goſpel doth not ſo clearly propound it, or ſo much inſiſt upon it, as not principally belonging to the evangelical covenant, the which, in reward to the performance of its conditions by us, peculiarly doth offer bleſſings ſpiritual, and relating to the future ſtate; as alſo ſcarce deſerving to be mentioned in compariſon to thoſe ſuperior bleſſings. Yet as the celeſtial benefits, although not openly tendered in the Jewiſh Law, were yet myſtically couched therein, and cloſely deſigned for the ſpiritual and hearty practiſers of religion; ſo is the collation of temporal accommodations to be underſtood to belong to all pious Chriſtians: there is a *codicil*, as it were, annexed to the New Teſtament, in which God ſignifieth his intention to furniſh his children with all that is needful or convenient for them. His providence hath not ceaſed to watch over us, his bounty doth not fail toward us even in this reſpect; his care will not be wanting to feed us and clothe us comfortably, to protect us from evil, to proſper our good undertakings. Hence doth he command us to care for nothing, but *to caſt our care upon him, to recommend our buſineſs to him, becauſe he careth for us;* he *will never forſake us;* he will hear our prayers, and help us. Hence we are enjoined *not to truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.* Hence it is ſaid, that *The divine power hath given us all things pertaining unto life and godlineſs, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.* Hence it is

Prov. xi. 31. Deut. xxviii. 1. vii. 12. xi. 13.

2 Cor. iv. 17. Rom. viii. 18.

1 Pet. v. 7. Phil. iv. 6. Heb. xiii. 5. Matth. vi. 25. 1 Tim. vi. 17.

2 Pet. i. 3.

promiſed by our Lord, that, *If we ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, all things ſhall be added to us.* Hence it is inferred, as conſequential to the nature of the evangelical diſpenſation, that we cannot want any good thing; *He,* ſaith St. Paul, *that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* In fine, hence it is propoſed as notorious, that nothing is permitted to fall out otherwiſe than as conduceth to our good. *We know,* ſaith St. Paul, *that all things work together for good unto thoſe that love God:* nor *will God,* in any caſe, *ſuffer us to be tempted,* by any want or preſſure, *beyond what we are able to bear.* Thus is piety evidently profitable, as *having the promiſes of this life,* or exhibiting all temporal bleſſings deſirable to the practiſers thereof.

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Matth. vi. 33. Rom. viii. 32. Rom. viii. 28. 1 Cor. x. 13.

But infinitely more profitable it is, as *having the promiſes of the future life,* or as procuring a title to thoſe incomparably more excellent bleſſings of the other world; thoſe *indefectible treaſures,* that *incorruptible, undefiled,* Luke xii. 33. *and never-fading inheritance, reſerved in heaven for us;* 1 Pet. i. 4. that *exceeding weight of glory;* thoſe *ineffable joys of* 2 Cor. iv. 17. *paradiſe,* that lightſome countenance and beatifying preſence of God; that unconceivably and unexpreſſibly joyful, glorious, perfect, and endleſs bliſs; briefly, all that is compriſed and intimated in thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Infinitely profitable ſurely muſt that be, which procureth thoſe things for us: and in theſe reſpects great reaſon had St. Paul to ſay, that *Godlineſs is profitable for all things.*

1 Pet. i. 8. iv. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

But farther to evidence and recommend this point, I might propound certain peculiar advantages ariſing from piety, which have a very general influence upon our lives, and do afford unto them exceeding benefit: but this I muſt, in regard to the time and your patience, at preſent forbear.

SERMON III.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 Tim. iv. 8.

——But Godlineſs is profitable for all things.

SERM. III. In diſcourſing formerly upon theſe words, I did propound divers general conſiderations, ſerving to confirm and recommend this aſſertion of St. Paul. I ſhall now inſiſt upon ſome others more particular, which yet ſeem much conducible to the ſame purpoſe, declaring the vaſt utility of religion or piety.

I. We may conſider, that religion doth preſcribe the trueſt and beſt rules of action; thence enlightening our mind, and rectifying our practice in all matters, and upon all occaſions, ſo that whatever is performed according to it, is done well and wiſely, with a comely grace in regard to others, with a cheerful ſatisfaction in our own mind, with the beſt aſſurance, that things are here capable of, to find happy ſucceſs and beneficial fruit.

Of all things in the world there is nothing more generally profitable than light: by it we converſe with the world, and have all things ſet before us; by it we truly and eaſily diſcern things in their right magnitude, ſhape, and colour; by it we guide our ſteps ſafely in proſecution of what is good, and ſhunning what is noxious; by it our ſpirits are comfortably warmed and cheered, our life conſequently, our health, our vigour, and activity are

preſerved. The like benefits doth religion, which is the light of our ſoul, yield to it. Pious men are *children of the light*; pious works are works of light *ſhining before men*. *God's word* (or true religion) *is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path*; enabling us to perceive things, and judge rightly of them; teaching us to walk ſtraightly and ſurely, without erring or ſtumbling; qualifying us to embrace what is uſeful, and to avoid hurtful things; preſerving our ſpiritual life, and diſpoſing us to act well with a vigorous alacrity: without it a man is ſtark blind, and utterly benighted, *gropeth* in doubt, wandereth in miſtake, trippeth upon all occaſions, and often falleth into miſchief. *The path of the juſt*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *is as the ſhining light. The way of the wicked is as darkneſs, they know not at what they ſtumble. Righteouſneſs keepeth him that is upright in the way; but wickedneſs overthroweth the ſinner.*

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Luke xvi. 8. Eph. v. 8. 1 Theſſ. v. 5. John xii. 36. Matt. v. 16. Eph. v. 11. Pſal. cxix. 105. If. lix. 10. Job v. 14. Deut. xxviii. 29. Prov. iv. 18, 19. Prov. xiii. 6. xi. 3. 5.

Again: it is a fair ornament of a man, and a grand convenience both to himſelf, and to others with whom he converſeth or dealeth, to act regularly, uniformly, and conſiſtently; freeing a man's ſelf from diſtraction and irreſolution in his mind, from change and confuſion in his proceedings; ſecuring others from deluſion and diſappointment in their tranſactions with him. [a] Even a bad rule conſtantly obſerved is therefore better than none: order and perſeverance in any way ſeemeth more convenient than roving and toſſing about in uncertainties. But, ſecluding a regard to the precepts of religion, there can hardly be any ſure or ſettled rule, which firmly can engage a man to, or effectually reſtrain a man from any thing.

There is ſcarce in nature any thing ſo wild, ſo untractable, ſo unintelligible, as a man who hath no bridle of conſcience to guide or check him. A profane man is like a ſhip, without anchor to ſtay him, or rudder to ſteer him, or compaſs to guide him; ſo that he is toſſed with any wind, and driven with any wave, none knoweth whither;

[a] Via cuncti aliquid extremum eſt; error immenſus eſt. *Sen. Ep.* 16.

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whither bodily temper doth ſway him, or paſſion doth hurry him, or intereſt doth pull him, or example leadeth him, or company inveigleth and haleth him, or humour tranſporteth him; whither any ſuch variable and unaccountable cauſes determine him, or divers of them together diſtract him: whence he ſo rambleth and hovereth, that he can ſeldom himſelf tell what in any caſe he ſhould do, nor can another gueſs it; ſo that you cannot at any time know where to find him, or how to deal with him: you cannot with reaſon ever rely upon him, ſo *unſtable he is in all his ways.* He is in effect a mere child, all humour and giddineſs, ſomewhat worſe than a beaſt, which, following the inſtinct of its nature, is conſtant and regular, and thence tractable; or at leaſt ſo untractable, that no man will be deceived in meddling with him. Nothing therefore can be more unmanly than ſuch a perſon, nothing can be more unpleaſant than to have to do with him [b].

But a pious man, being ſteadily governed by conſcience, and a regard to certain principles, doth both underſtand himſelf and is intelligible to others: he preſently deſcrieth what in any caſe he is to do, and can render an account of his acting: you may know him clearly, and aſſuredly tell what he will do, and may therefore fully confide in him [c].

What therefore law and government are to the public, things neceſſary to preſerve the world in order, peace, and ſafety, (that men may know what to do, and diſtinguiſh what is their own,) that is piety to each man's private ſtate, and to ordinary converſation: it freeth a man's own life from diſorder and diſtraction; it prompteth men how to behave themſelves toward one another with ſecurity and confidence.

This it doth by confining our practice within ſettled bounds: but this advantage appeareth greater, conſider-

[b] Nihil eſt tam occupatum, tam multiforme, tot ac tam variis affectibus conciſum atque laceratum, quam mala mens. *Quint.* xii. 1.

[c] Οἱ ἐπιεικεῖς ἑαυτοῖς ὁμονοοῦσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις, ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ὄντες, ὡς εἰσὶν· τῶν γοῦν τοιούτων μένει γὰρ τὰ βουλήματα, καὶ οὐ μεταῤῥεῖ, ὥσπερ εὔριπος. *Ariſt. Eth.* ix. 6.

ing that the rules which it preſcribeth are the beſt that can be. Such they muſt needs be, as proceeding from infallible wiſdom and immenſe goodneſs; being indeed no other than laws, which the all-wiſe and moſt gracious Lord and Maker of the world, out of tender kindneſs to his ſubjects and creatures, with eſpecial regard to our welfare, hath been pleaſed to enact and declare. What of old he ſaid to the Iſraelites concerning their laws, may with greater advantage be applied to thoſe, which ſhould regulate our lives: *And now, Iſrael, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to ſerve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his ſtatutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?* (For thy good; that was the deſign of their being commanded; thereto the obſervance of them did tend.) And that commendation, which by the Levites in Nehemiah is given to that, doth more clearly and fully agree to the Chriſtian (general and perfect) inſtitution: *Thou cameſt down from mount Sinai, and ſpakeſt with them from heaven, and gaveſt them right judgments, and true laws, good ſtatutes and commandments.* And, *The law,* ſaith the Apoſtle Paul, *is holy; the commandment is holy, juſt, and good:* as ſuch it is recommended to us by its Author, ſo we Chriſtians are by many great arguments aſſured that it is, and that it is ſuch even our natural reaſon dictateth; ſo (as to the chief inſtances thereof) the moſt wiſe and ſober men always have acknowledged, ſo the general conſent doth avow, and ſo even common experience doth atteſt. For, heartily to love and reverence the Maker of all things, who by every thing apparent before us demonſtrateth himſelf incomprehenſibly powerful, wiſe, and good, to be kind and charitable to our neighbours, to be juſt and faithful in our dealings, to be ſober and modeſt in our minds, to be meek and gentle in our demeanours, to be ſtaunch and temperate in our enjoyments, and the like principal rules of duty, are ſuch, that the common reaſon of men and continual experience do approve them as hugely conducible to the

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Deut. x. 12, 13.

Neh. ix. 13.

Rom. vii. 12.

SERM. III. public good of men, and to each man's private welfare. So notoriouſly beneficial they appear, that for the juſtification of them we might appeal even to the judgment and conſcience of thoſe perſons, who are moſt concerned to derogate from them. For hardly can any man be ſo ſenſeleſs, or ſo lewd, as ſeriouſly to diſapprove or condemn them, as inwardly to blame or ſlight thoſe who truly act according to them. The will of men ſometimes may be ſo depraved, that diſſolute perſons wantonly and heedleſsly may ſcoff at and ſeem to diſparage goodneſs; that good men by very bad men for doing well may be envied and hated: (their being ſo treated is commonly an argument of the goodneſs of their perſons and of their ways:) but the underſtanding of men can hardly be ſo corrupted, that piety, charity, juſtice. temperance, meekneſs, can in good earneſt conſiderately by any man be diſallowed, or that perſons apparently practiſing them can be deſpiſed; but rather, in ſpite of all contrary prejudice and diſaffections, ſuch things and ſuch perſons cannot but in judgment and heart be eſteemed by all men. The luſtre of them by a natural and neceſſary efficacy (like that of heaven's glorious light) dazzleth the ſight and charmeth the ſpirits of all men living; the beauty of them irreſiſtibly conquereth and commandeth in the apprehenſions of men: the more they are obſerved, the more uſeful and needful they appear for the good of men; all the fruits which grow from the obſervance of them being to all men's taſte very pleaſant, to all men's experience very wholeſome. Indeed, all the good, whereby common life is adorned, is ſweetened, is rendered pleaſant and deſirable, doth ſpring thence; all the miſchiefs which infeſt particular men, and which diſturb the world, palpably do ariſe from the tranſgreſſion or neglect thereof.

If we look on a perſon ſticking to thoſe rules, we ſhall perceive him to have a cheerful mind and compoſed paſſions, to be at peace within, and ſatisfied with himſelf; to live in comely order, in good repute, in fair correſpondence, and firm concord with his neighbours. If we mark what preſerveth the body ſound and luſty, what keepeth

the mind vigorous and briſk, what ſaveth and improveth the eſtate, what upholdeth the good name, what guardeth and graceth a man's whole life; it is nothing elſe but proceeding in our demeanour and dealings according to the honeſt and wiſe rules of piety. If we view a place where theſe commonly in good meaſure are obſerved, we ſhall diſcern, that peace and proſperity do flouriſh there; that all things proceed on ſweetly and fairly; that men generally drive on converſation and commerce together contentedly, delightfully, advantageouſly, yielding friendly advice and aid mutually, ſtriving to render one another happy; that few clamours or complaints are heard there, few contentions or ſtirs do appear, few diſaſters or tragedies do occur; that ſuch a place hath indeed much of the face, much of the ſubſtance of Paradiſe. SERM. III.

But if you mind a perſon who neglecteth them, you will find his mind galled with ſore remorſe, racked with anxious fears and doubts, agitated with ſtorms of paſſion and luſt, living in diſorder and diſgrace, jarring with others, and no leſs diſſatisfied with himſelf. If you obſerve what doth impair the health, doth weaken and fret the mind, doth waſte the eſtate, doth blemiſh the reputation, doth expoſe the whole life to danger and trouble; what is it but thwarting theſe good rules? If you conſider a place where theſe are much neglected, it will appear like a wilderneſs of ſavage beaſts, or a ſty of foul ſwine, or a hell of curſed fiends; full of roaring and tearing, of factions and feuds, of diſtractions and confuſions, of pitiful objects, of doleful moans, of tragical events. Men are there wallowing in filth, wildly revelling, bickering and ſquabbling, defaming, circumventing, diſturbing and vexing one another; as if they affected nothing more than to render one another as miſerable as they can. It is from luſt and luxury, from ambition and avarice, from envy and ſpite, and the like diſpoſitions, which religion chiefly doth interdict, that all ſuch horrid miſchiefs do ſpring.

In fine, the precepts of religion are no other, than ſuch

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as phyſicians would preſcribe for the health of our bodies, as politicians would avow needful for the peace of the ſtate, as Epicurean philoſophers do recommend for the tranquillity of our mind, and pleaſure of our lives; ſuch as common reaſon dictateth, and daily trial ſheweth conducible to our welfare in all reſpects: which conſequently, were there no law exacting them of us, we ſhould in wiſdom chooſe to obſerve, and voluntarily impoſe on ourſelves, confeſſing them to be fit matters of law, as moſt advantageous and requiſite to the good (general and particular) of mankind. So that what Plutarch reporteth Plut. in Sol. Solon to have ſaid, that *he had ſo ſquared his laws to the citizens, that all of them might clearly perceive, that to obſerve them was more for their benefit and intereſt than to violate them,* is far more true concerning the divine laws.

II. We may conſider more particularly, that piety yieldeth to the practiſer all kind of interior content, peace, and joy; freeth him from all kinds of diſſatisfaction, regret, and diſquiet; which is an ineſtimably great advantage: for certainly the happineſs and miſery of men are wholly or chiefly ſeated and founded in the mind. If that is in a good ſtate of health, reſt, and cheerfulneſs, whatever the perſon's outward condition or circumſtances be, he cannot be wretched: if that be diſtempered or diſturbed, he cannot be happy. For what if a man ſeem very poor; if he be abundantly ſatisfied in his own poſſeſſions and enjoyments? What if he taſteth not the pleaſures of ſenſe; if he enjoyeth purer and ſweeter delights of mind? What if tempeſts of fortune ſurround him; if his mind be calm and ſerene? What if he have few or no friends; if he yet be throughly in peace and amity with himſelf, and can delightfully converſe with his own thoughts? What if men ſlight, cenſure, or revile him; if he doth value his own ſtate, doth approve his own actions, doth acquit himſelf of blame in his own conſcience? Such external contingencies can ſurely no more prejudice a man's real happineſs, than winds bluſtering abroad can harm or trouble him that abideth in a good room within doors, than ſtorms and fluctuations at ſea can moleſt him

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who standeth firm upon the shore. On the other hand, the greatest affluence of seeming goods will avail nothing, if real content of mind be wanting. For what will the highest eminence of outward state import to him that is dejected in his own conceit? What if the world court and bless him, or if all people do admire and applaud him; if he be displeased with, if he condemneth, if he despiseth himself? What if the weather look fair and bright without, if storms rage in his breast, if black clouds do overcast his soul? What if he do abound with friends, and enjoy peace abroad; if he find distraction at home, and is at cruel variance with himself? How can a man enjoy any satisfaction, or relish any pleasure, while sore remorse doth sting him, or solicitous doubts and fears do rack him[d]?

Prov. xviii. 4.

Now that from the practice of religion, and from it alone, such inward content and pleasure do spring; that it only ministereth reason of content, and disposeth the mind to enjoy it; that it extirpateth the grounds and roots of discontent; that it is the only mother of true, sober alacrity and tranquillity of mind, will, upon considering things, be manifest.

There is no other thing here in this world that can yield any solid or stable content to our mind. For all present enjoyments are transient and evanid; and of any future thing, in this kingdom of change and contingency, there can be no assurance. There is nothing below large enough to fill our vast capacities, or to satiate our boundless desires, or to appease our squeamish delicacy. There is nothing whose sweetness we do not presently exhaust and suck dry; whereof thence we do not soon grow weary; quite loathing, or faintly liking it. There is not any thing which is not slippery and fleeting; so that we can for a long time hope to possess it, or for any time can enjoy it, without restless care in keeping it, and

Prov. xxvii. 24.

Prov. xxvii. 20.

[d] *Chrysostom. in Rom.* i. *Or.* 1. Εὐθυμίαν γὰρ καὶ χαρὰν οὐκ ἀρχῆς μέγεθος, οὐ χρημάτων πλῆθος, οὐ δυναστείας ὄγκος, οὐκ ἰσχὺς σώματος, οὐ πολυτέλεια τραπέζης, οὐχ ἱματίων κόσμος, οὐκ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ποιεῖν εἴωθεν, ἀλλ' ἢ κατέρθωμα ῥόνον πνευματικὸν, καὶ συνειδὸς ἀγαθόν.

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anxious fear of loſing it. Nothing there is, in the purſuance, the cuſtody, the defence and maintenance whereof we are not liable to diſappointments and croſſes. Nothing conſequently there is productive of any ſound content to the faſtidious, impatient, greedy, and reſtleſs heart of man. The greateſt confluence of preſent, corporeal, ſecular things (of all the health, the riches, the dignity, the power, the friendſhips and dependencies, the wit, the learning and wiſdom, the reputation and renown in this world) will not afford much of it: which yet is but an imaginary ſuppoſition; for in effect hardly do all ſuch accommodations of life concur in any ſtate. There is ever ſome *dead fly* in our box, which marreth our *ointment*; ſome adherent inconvenience, which ſoureth the guſt of our enjoyments: there is always ſome good thing abſent, which we do want or long for; ſome ill thing preſent, or in proſpect, which we abhor, would avoid, do fear may come. If therefore we would find content, we muſt not ſeek it here; we muſt want it, or have it from another world: it muſt come hither from heaven, and thence only piety can fetch it down. This, inſtead of theſe unſatisfying, uncertain, and unſtable things, ſupplieth us with goods adequate to our moſt outſtretched wiſhes, infallibly ſure, inceſſantly durable; *an indefectible treaſure, an incorruptible inheritance, an unſhakable kingdom*, a perfect and endleſs joy, capable to repleniſh the vaſteſt heart: which he that hath a good title to, or a confident hope of, how can he be otherwiſe than extremely pleaſed, than fully content? It aſſureth the favour and friendſhip of God, of him that is abſolute Lord and diſpoſer of all things: the which he that hath, and confideth in, what can he want or wiſh more? what can he fear? what can annoy or diſmay him? what can hap to him worthy to be deemed evil or ſad? What is poverty to him, for whom God is concerned to provide? What is diſgrace to him, that hath the regard and approbation of God? What is danger to him, whom God continually protecteth? What can any diſtreſs work on him, whom God doth comfort, and will relieve? What is any thing to him, who is ſenſible that all things are purpoſely

Eccleſ. x. 1.

Θησαυὸν ἀνέκλειστον, κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον, βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον.

diſpoſed to him by that Wiſdom which perfectly knoweth what is beſt; by that Goodneſs which entirely loveth him? In fine, he that is conſcious to himſelf of being well-affected in mind, and acting the beſt way, who is ſatisfied in the ſtate of his ſoul, ſecure from God's diſpleaſure, and hopeful of his favour, what can make any grievous impreſſion on him? What other affections than ſuch as are moſt grateful and pleaſant can lodge in his ſoul? Joy and peace have natural ſeeds in ſuch a mind, and neceſſarily muſt ſpring up there; in proportion, I mean, and according to the degrees of piety reſident therein. SERM. III.

The Epicureans did conceit and boaſt, that having, by their atheiſtical explications of natural effects, and common events here, diſcarded the belief and dread of religion, they had laid a ſtrong foundation for tranquillity of mind, had driven away all the cauſes of grief and fear, ſo that nothing then remained troubleſome or terrible unto us; and conſequently, what, ſaid they, could forbid, but that we ſhould be entirely contented, glad, and happy?— *Nos exæquat victoria cœlo;* no God then ſurely could be more happy than we. But their attempt in many reſpects was vain and lame. They preſumed of a victory which it is impoſſible to obtain: and ſuppoſing they had got it, their triumph would not have been ſo glorious, their ſucceſs would not have been ſo great, as they pretended. For ſeeing no Epicurean diſcourſe can baffle the potent arguments which perſuade religion; (thoſe arguments, which the viſible conſtitution of nature, the current tradition of all ages, the general conſent of men, the pregnant atteſtations of hiſtory and experience concerning ſupernatural and miraculous events, do afford;) ſince the being and providence of God have proofs ſo clear and valid, that no ſubtlety of man can ſo far evade them, as not to be ſhaken with them, as wholly to be freed from doubt and ſuſpicion of their truth; ſince there can be no means of evincing the negative part in thoſe queſtions to be true or probable; it is impoſſible that any conſidering man, in this cauſe againſt religion, ſhould ſuppoſe himſelf to have acquired an ab-

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ſolute and ſecure victory, or that he ſhould reap ſubſtantial fruit of comfort thence. It cannot be, that any man ſhould enjoy any perfect quiet, without acting ſo as to get ſome good hope of avoiding thoſe dreadful miſchiefs, which religion threateneth to the tranſgreſſors of its precepts. Were there indeed but reaſon enough to ſtir, if not to ſtagger, an infidel; were it ſomewhat dubious whether, yea, were it great odds that there are not reſerved any puniſhments for impiety, as indeed there is, if not the perfecteſt aſſurance imaginable, yet vaſt advantage on the contrary ſide; were there but any ſmall reaſon for a judgment to come, as there are apparently very many and great ones; had moſt men conſpired in denying Providence, as ever generally they have conſented in avowing it; were there a pretence of miracles for eſtabliſhing the mortality and impunity of ſouls, as there have been numberleſs ſtrongly teſtified by good witneſſes and great events, to confirm the oppoſite doctrines; did moſt wiſe and ſober men judge in favour of irreligion, as commonly they ever did and ſtill do otherwiſe; yet wiſdom would require that men ſhould chooſe to be pious, ſince otherwiſe no man can be throughly ſecure. It is a wildneſs, not to dread the leaſt poſſibility of incurring ſuch horrible miſchiefs: any hazard of ſuch importance cannot but ſtartle a man in his wits. To be in the leaſt obnoxious to eternal torments, if men would think upon it as men, (that is, as rational and provident creatures,) could not but diſturb them. And indeed ſo it is in experience; for whatever they ſay, or ſeem, all atheiſts and profane men are inwardly ſuſpicious and fearful; they care not to die, and would gladly eſcape the trial of what ſhall follow death. But let us grant or imagine the Epicurean ſucceſsful as he could wiſh in this enterpriſe of ſubduing religion: yet except therewith he can alſo trample down reaſon, new mould human nature, ſubjugate all natural appetites and paſſions, alter the ſtate of things here, and transform the world, he will yet in the greateſt part fail of his conceited advantages; very ſhort he will fall of triumphing in a

contented and quiet mind. That which accrueth thence will at moſt be no more than ſome negative content, or a partial indolency, ariſing from his being reſcued from ſome particular cares and fears; which exceedeth not the tranquillity of a beaſt, or the ſtupidity of one that is out of his ſenſes: that is all he can claim, which yet is more than he can ever compaſs. For he cannot be as a beaſt, or a mere ſot, if he would: reaſon, reflecting on preſent evils, and boding others future, will afflict him; his own unſatiable deſires, unavoidable fears, and untameable paſſions, will diſquiet him. Were the other world quite out of his faith, or his thought, yet this world would yield trouble ſufficient to render him void of any ſteady reſt, or ſolid joy. All men ever have, and ever will complain, that the burdens, croſſes, ſatieties of this life, do much ſurpaſs the conveniences and comforts of it. So that, were no other to be expected or feared, this of itſelf would become grievous and nauſeous; we ſhould ſoon have enough or too much of it, without a ſupport and ſupply from other-where. In the largeſt affluence of things, in the deepeſt calm of our ſtate, we are apt to nauſeate, and are weary even of our proſperity itſelf; the which indeed commonly hath ingredients not only ſomewhat unſavoury, but very bitter and loathſome. We may add, that had thoſe profane attempters quite baniſhed religion, they with it muſt have driven away all the benefits and comforts of it: which, even ſuppoſing them but imaginary, are yet the greateſt which common life doth need, or can deſire: with it they would ſend packing juſtice, fidelity, charity, ſobriety, and all ſolid virtue, things which cannot firmly ſubſiſt without conſcience: which being gone, human life would be the moſt diſorderly, moſt unſafe, moſt wretched and contemptible thing that can be; nothing but inſipid and flaſhy ſenſualities would be left behind to comfort a man with; and thoſe hardly any man (by reaſon of competitions and contentions for them, nowiſe reſtrainable) could enjoy quietly or ſafely. It is therefore piety alone, which, by raiſing hopes of bleſſings and joys incomparably ſuperior

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Non temperate vexor, ſed nauſea. *Senec. de Tranq. An.* 1.

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to any here, that cannot be taken from us, can lay any ground of true content, of ſubſtantial and poſitive content; ſuch as conſiſteth not only in removing the objects and cauſes of vexatious paſſions, but in employing the moſt pleaſant affections (love, hope, joy,) with a delightful complacence upon their proper and moſt noble objects.

Rom. xiv. 17. *The kingdom of God* (and that only, no other kingdom hath that privilege) *conſiſteth in righteouſneſs* (firſt, then in) *peace and ſpiritual joy*. No philoſopher, with truth and reaſon, can make that overture to us, which our Lord

Matt. xi. 28. doth; *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls*. Out of religion there can be no aphoriſm pretended like to that of the

Iſa. xxvi. 3. Prophet, *Thou ſhalt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee*.

If indeed we diſtinctly ſurvey all the grounds and ſources of content, it will appear that religion only can afford it.

Doth it reſult from a well governing and ordering our paſſions? Then it is plain, that only a pious man is capable thereof; for piety only can effect that: it alone, with the powerful aid of Divine grace, doth guide our paſſions by exact rules, doth ſet them upon worthy objects, doth temper and tune them in juſt harmony, doth ſeaſonably curb and check them, doth rightly correct and reform them [e].

This no bare reaſon (which naturally is ſo dim and ſo feeble in man) can achieve: much leſs can unreaſonableneſs do it, which is ever prevalent in irreligious perſons. Their paſſions do ever run wildly and at random, in no good pace, within no good compaſs, toward the meaneſt and baſeſt objects; whence they can have no reſt or quiet in their minds. As they are conſtantly offending, ſo will they ever be puniſhing themſelves, with inteſtine broils and

Iſa. xlviii. 22. conflicts, with diſſatisfactions and regrets. Hence, *There is*

[e] Mala mens—cum inſidiatur, ſpe, curis, labore diſtringitur; et jam cum ſceleris compos fuerit, ſolicitudine, pœnitentia, pœnarum omnium exſpectatione torquetur. *Quint.* xii. 1.

no peace to the wicked. He is like the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt. God (as St. Auſtin ſpeaketh) *hath ſaid it, and ſo it is, Every inordinate mind is a puniſhment to itſelf*[f]. SERM. III. Iſa. lvii. 20.

Doth content ſpring from a hearty approbation of, or a complacence, in a man's own actions; from reflection that he conſtantly doth act according to reaſon and wiſdom, to juſtice and duty? Then can the pious man alone pretend to it, who knoweth that he walketh *inoffenſively toward God and man;* that he conſulteth his own beſt intereſt and welfare; that aſſuredly no bad conſequence can attend his unblameable behaviour; that moſt wiſe men have declared their approbation of his proceedings; that if he prove in his chief deſign miſtaken, yet no miſchief can thence befall him; yea, that he is not thereby quite diſappointed, ſeeing even much preſent ſatisfaction and convenience do ariſe up to him from his practice.

Nifi ſapienti ſua non placent: omnis ſtultitia laborat faſtidio ſui. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

Doth content grow from a ſound and healthful conſtitution of ſoul? It is the pious man alone that hath that, whoſe mind is clear from diſtempers of vice and paſſion. The impious man is infirm, out of order, full of diſeaſe and pain, according to the Prophet's deſcription of him; —*The whole head is ſick, and the whole heart faint: from the ſole of the foot even unto the head there is no ſoundneſs in it; but wounds, and bruiſes, and putrefying ſores.* Iſa. i. 5, 6.

Doth content ariſe ſpecially from good ſucceſs in our attempts, or from proſperous events befalling us? Then it is the pious man who is moſt capable thereof: for he only is ſecure, that what ſeemeth good and proſperous is really ſuch to him, as meant for his good by the Divine goodneſs, as tending thereto by the guidance of infallible wiſdom. As he only hath ground to hope for ſucceſs, becauſe he confideth in God, becauſe he dutifully ſeeketh God's help, becauſe God is favourably diſpoſed toward him, becauſe God *ordereth his ſteps*, becauſe God is by promiſe engaged to bleſs him, becauſe he is conſcious of

[f] Nulla major pœna nequitiæ eſt, quam quod ſibi ac ſuis diſplicet. *Sen. Ep.* 42.

Τιμωρία πάσης ἀδικίας ἀκόλουθος. *Plat. de Leg.* 5.

Deus juſſit, et ita eſt, Sibi pœna eſt omnis inordinatus animus. *Aug. Conf.*

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intentions to render God thanks and praiſe for it, to employ his ſucceſs to God's honour and ſervice: ſo he only can be ſatisfied with the appearance of ſucceſs, being able with aſſurance to ſay after St. Paul, *We know that to thoſe who love God all things cooperate for good.*

Rom. viii. 28.

Is ſecurity from danger, from trouble, from want, from all evil, a ſource or matter of content? It certainly doth attend the pious man; God being his eſpecial protector, his comforter, his purveyor. *There ſhall no evil befall the juſt: There ſhall no plague come near his dwelling. God keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. He delivereth the righteous out of their troubles. The deſire of the righteous ſhall be granted. There is no want to them that fear God.* So do the holy oracles aſſure us.

Prov. xii. 21. Pſ. xci. 10. xxxiv. 20. 17. Prov. x. 24. Pſ. xxxiv. 9.

Doth contentedneſs ſpring from ſufficiency, real or apprehended? This appertaineth peculiarly to the pious man: for, having God, the maſter of all, for *his portion*, he hath the richeſt eſtate that can be; he hath all that he can deſire, he cannot but take himſelf to have enough. Hence *Godlineſs with contentedneſs* (μετ' αὐταρκείας, *with ſufficiency*) *is*, as St. Paul ſaith, μέγας πορισμὸς, *the great way of gaining*. He ſaith it not, as ſuppoſing godlineſs and contentedneſs to be ſeparable; but rather, as implying godlineſs therefore to be moſt gainful, becauſe ſufficiency and contentedneſs do ever attend it. In fine, if that ſaying of Seneca be true, that, *If to any man the things he poſſeſſeth do not ſeem moſt ample, although he be maſter of the whole world, he is yet miſerable;* then aſſuredly the pious man only can be happy; for to him alone his poſſeſſions can ſeem the largeſt and beſt, ſuch as there can be no poſſible acceſſion to, or amendment of. For nothing can be greater or better than God, in whom he hath a ſteadfaſt propriety, whoſe infinite power and wiſdom are engaged to do him the utmoſt good that he is capable of. And farther,

1 Tim. vi. 6.

Si cui ſua non videntur ampliſſima, licet totius mundi dominus ſit, tamen miſer eſt. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

III. Seeing we have mentioned happineſs, or the *ſummum bonum*, the utmoſt ſcope of human deſire, we do add, that piety doth ſurely confer it. Happineſs, whatever it be, hath certainly an eſſential coherence with piety.

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Theſe are reciprocal propoſitions, both of them infallibly true, He that is pious is happy; and, He that is happy is pious. No man doth undertake or proſecute any thing, which he doth not apprehend in ſome order or degree conducing to that which all men under a confuſed notion regard and tend to, which they call happineſs, the higheſt good, the chiefeſt deſirable thing. But in their judgments about this thing, or the means of attaining it, as men diſſent much; ſo of neceſſity moſt of them muſt be miſtaken. Moſt, indeed, do aim and ſhoot at a mere ſhadow of profit, or at that which is very little conſiderable, and in compariſon nothing at all; which little conduceth to the perfection of their nature, or the ſatisfaction of their deſire. If they miſs the mark, they are diſappointed; if they hit it, they are no leſs, and in effect hit nothing. But whatever this grand matter is, in whatever it conſiſteth, however it be procured; be it the poſſeſſion and fruition of ſome ſpecial choice goods, or an aggregation and affluence of all goods; piety ſurely is the main ingredient and principal cauſe thereof. All other goods without it are inſignificant and unuſeful thereto; and it cannot be wanting, where piety is. Be a man never ſo rich, ſo powerful, ſo learned and knowing, ſo proſperous in his affairs, ſo honourable in the opinions and affections of men: yet nowiſe happy can he be, if he is not pious; being he wanteth the beſt goods, and is ſubject to the worſt evils; being he wanteth the love and favour of God, he wanteth peace and ſatisfaction of conſcience, he wanteth a right enjoyment of preſent things, he wanteth ſecurity concerning his final welfare. Be he never ſo poor, ſo low in the eyes of men, ſo forlorn and deſtitute of worldly conveniences; yet if he be pious, he cannot be wretched: for he hath an intereſt in goods incomparably moſt precious, and is ſafe from all conſiderable evils; he hath a free reſort to the inexhauſtible fountain of all happineſs, he hath a right to immenſe and endleſs felicity, the which eminently containeth all the goods we are capable of; he is poſſeſſed thereof in hope and certain reverſion, there is but a moment to paſs be-

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fore his complete fruition of it. The want of all other petty things no more can maim the integrity of his felicity, than cutting the hair, or paring the nails, do mutilate a man: all other things are but ſuperfluities or excreſcences in regard to the conſtitution of happineſs. Whatever happeneth, that will aſſuredly be true, which is ſo much inculcated in holy Scripture, *Bleſſed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways; happy ſhall he be, and it ſhall be well with him.* Piety is indeed fraught with beatitudes, every part thereof yieldeth peculiar bleſſedneſs. To the love of God, to charity toward our neighbour, to purity of heart, to meekneſs, to humility, to patience, to mercifulneſs, to peaceableneſs, beatitude is aſcribed by our Lord, the great Judge and Diſpenſer of it. Each religious performance hath happy fruits growing from it, and bliſsful rewards aſſigned thereto. All pious diſpoſitions are fountains of pleaſant ſtreams, which by their confluence do make up a full ſea of felicity.

Pſ. cxxviii. 1, 2. cxii. 1.

Matt. v.

IV. It is a peculiar advantage of piety, that it furniſheth employment fit for us, worthy of us, hugely grateful, and highly beneficial to us. Man is a very buſy and active creature, which cannot live and do nothing, whoſe thoughts are in reſtleſs motion, whoſe deſires are ever ſtretching at ſomewhat, who perpetually will be working either good or evil to himſelf: wherefore greatly profitable muſt that thing be, which determineth him to act well, to ſpend his care and pain on that which is truly advantageous to him; and that is religion only. It alone faſteneth our thoughts, affections, and endeavours, upon occupations worthy the dignity of our nature, ſuiting the excellency of our natural capacities and endowments, tending to the perfection and advancement of our reaſon, to the enriching and ennobling of our ſouls. Secluding that, we have nothing in the world to ſtudy, to affect, to purſue, not very mean and below us, not very baſe and miſbecoming us, as men of reaſon and judgment. What have we to do but to eat and drink, like horſes or like ſwine; but to ſport and play, like children or apes; but

to bicker and ſcuffle about trifles and impertinences, like ideots? what, but to ſcrape or ſcramble for uſeleſs pelf; to hunt after empty ſhows and ſhadows of honour, or the vain fancies and dreams of men? what, but to wallow or baſk in ſordid pleaſures, the which ſoon degenerate into remorſe and bitterneſs? To which ſort of employments were a man confined, what a pitiful thing would he be, and how inconſiderable were his life! Were a man deſigned only, like a fly, to buz about here for a time, ſucking in the air, and licking the dew, then ſoon to vaniſh back into nothing, or to be transformed into worms; how ſorry and deſpicable a thing were he? And ſuch without religion we ſhould be. But it ſupplieth us with buſineſs of a moſt worthy nature and lofty importance; it ſetteth us upon doing things great and noble as can be; it engageth us to free our minds from all fond conceits, and cleanſe our hearts from all corrupt affections; to curb our brutiſh appetites, to tame our wild paſſions, to correct our perverſe inclinations, to conform the diſpoſitions of our ſoul and the actions of our life to the eternal laws of righteouſneſs and goodneſs: it putteth us upon the imitation of God, and aiming at the reſemblance of his perfections; upon obtaining a friendſhip and maintaining a correſpondence with the High and Holy One; upon fitting our minds for converſation and ſociety with the wiſeſt and pureſt ſpirits above; upon providing for an immortal ſtate, upon the acquiſt of joy and glory everlaſting. It employeth us in the divineſt actions, of promoting virtue, of performing beneficence, of ſerving the public, and doing good to all: the being exerciſed in which things doth indeed render a man highly conſiderable, and his life excellently valuable. SERM. III.

It is an employment moſt proper to us as reaſonable men. For what more proper entertainments can our mind have, than to be purifying and beautifying itſelf, to be keeping itſelf and its ſubordinate faculties in order, to be attending upon the management of thoughts, of paſſions, of words, of actions depending upon its governance?

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It is an employment moſt beneficial to us: in purſuing which we greatly better ourſelves, and improve our condition; we benefit and oblige others; we procure ſound reputation and ſteady friendſhips; we decline many irkſome miſchiefs and annoyances; *we do* not, like thoſe in the Prophet, *ſpend our labour for that which ſatisfieth not, nor ſpend our money for that which is not bread:* for both temporal proſperity and eternal felicity are the wages of the labour which we take herein.

Iſa. lv. 2.

It is an employment moſt conſtant, never allowing ſloth or liſtleſſneſs to creep in, inceſſantly buſying all our faculties with earneſt contention; according to that profeſſion of St. Paul, declaring the nature thereof, *Herein always do I exerciſe myſelf, to have a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward man.* Whence it is called a *fight*, and a *race*, implying the continual earneſtneſs of attention and activity, which is to be ſpent thereon.

Acts xxiv. 16.

It is withal a ſweet and grateful buſineſs: for it is a pious man's character, that *he delighteth greatly in God's commandments*; that *the commandments are not grievous to him*; that it is *his meat and drink to do God's will*; that *God's words* (or precepts) *are ſweeter than honey to his taſte*; that *the ways of* religious *wiſdom are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.* Whereas all other employments are weariſome, and ſoon become loathſome: this, the farther we proceed in it, the more pleaſant and ſatisfactory it groweth [s]. There is perpetual matter of victory over bad inclinations peſtering us within, and ſtrong temptations aſſailing us without: which to combat hath much delight; to maſter, breedeth unexpreſſible content. The ſenſe alſo of God's love, the influences of his grace and comfort communicated in the performances of devotion and all duty, the ſatisfaction of good conſcience, the aſſured hope of reward, the foretaſtes of future bliſs, do ſeaſon and ſweeten all the labours taken, and all the difficulties undergone therein.

Pſal. cxii. 1. 1 John v. 3. John iv. 34. Pſal. cxix. 103. Prov. iii. 17.

[s] Non poteſt cuiquam ſemper idem placere, niſi rectum. *Sen.* 20.
Dedit hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honeſta magis juvarent. *Quint.* i. 12.

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In fine, the bare light of nature hath diſcerned, that were it not for ſuch matters as theſe to ſpend a man's care and pains upon, this would be a lamentable world to live in. There was, for inſtance, an emperor great and mighty as ever did wield ſceptre upon earth, whoſe excellent virtue, coupled with wiſdom, (inferior, perhaps, to none that any man ever without ſpecial inſpiration hath been endowed with,) did qualify him with moſt advantage to examine and rightly to judge of things here; who, notwithſtanding all the conveniences which his royal eſtate and well ſettled proſperity might afford, (the which ſurely he had fully taſted and tried,) did yet thus expreſs his thoughts: Τί μοι ζῆν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ θεῶν, ἢ προνοίας κενῷ; *What doth it concern me to live in a world void of God, or void of Providence?* To govern the greateſt empire that ever was, in the deepeſt calm; to enjoy the largeſt affluences of wealth, of ſplendour, of reſpect, of pleaſure; to be loved, to be dreaded, to be ſerved, to be adored by ſo many nations; to have the whole civil world obſequious to his will and nod; all theſe things ſeemed vain and idle, not worthy of a man's regard, affection, or choice, in caſe there were no God to worſhip, no providence to obſerve, no piety to be exerciſed. So little worth the while common ſenſe hath adjudged it to live without religion. M. Ant. ii. 11. vi. 10.

V. It is a conſiderable benefit of piety, that it affordeth the beſt friendſhips and ſweeteſt ſociety. Man is framed for ſociety, and cannot live well without it: many of his faculties would be uſeleſs, many of his appetites would reſt unſatisfied in ſolitude. To have a friend wiſe and able, honeſt and good, unto whom upon all occaſions we may have recourſe for advice, for aſſiſtance, for conſolation, is a great convenience of life: and this benefit we owe to religion, which ſupplieth us with various friendſhips of the beſt kind, moſt beneficial and moſt ſweet unto us.

Nullius boni ſine ſocio jucunda poſſeſſio eſt. *Sen. Ep.* 6.

Ut aliarum rerum nobis innata dulcedo eſt, ſic amicitiæ. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

It maketh God our friend, a friend infinitely better than all friends, moſt affectionate and kind, moſt faithful and ſure, moſt able, moſt willing, and ever moſt ready to per-

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form all friendly offices, to yield advice in all our doubts, ſuccour in all our needs, comfort in all our troubles, ſatisfaction to all our deſires. Unto him it miniſtereth a free addreſs upon all occaſions; with him it alloweth us continually a moſt ſweet and pleaſant intercourſe. The pious man hath always the all-wiſe God to counſel him, to guide his actions and order his ſteps; he hath the Almighty to protect, ſupport, and relieve him; he hath the immenſe Goodneſs to commiſerate and comfort him; unto him he is not only encouraged, but obliged to reſort in need: upon him he may, he ought to diſcharge all his cares and burdens.

Prov. xii. 2. Pſal. xxxiv. 15. xxxiii. 18. cxlv. 19. xxxvii. 28. Job xxxvi. 7.

It conſequently doth engage all creatures in the world to be our friends, or inſtruments of good to us, according to their ſeveral capacities, by the direction and diſpoſal of God. All the ſervants of our great Friend will, in compliance to him, be ſervioeable to us, *Thou ſhalt be in league with the ſtones of the field, and the beaſts of the field ſhall be at peace with thee:* ſo Job's friend promiſeth him upon condition of piety. And God himſelf confirmeth that promiſe; *In that day,* ſaith he in the Prophet, *will I make a covenant for them with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground.* And again, *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* And, *The ſun ſhall not ſmite thee by day, nor the moon by night. Thou ſhalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon ſhalt thou trample under foot. They ſhall take up ſcorpions; and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them:* (ſo our Lord promiſed to his Diſciples.) Not only the heavens ſhall diſpenſe their kindly influences, and the earth yield her plentiful ſtores, and all the elements diſcharge their natural and ordinary good offices; nor only the tame and ſociable creatures ſhall upon this condition faithfully ſerve us; but even the moſt wild, moſt fierce, moſt ravenous, moſt venomous creatures ſhall, if there be need, prove friendly and helpful, or at

Job v. 23. Hoſ. ii. 18. Iſa. xliii. 2. Pſ. cxxi. 6. Pſ. xci. 13. Mark xvi. 18. Deut. xxviii. 12.

leaſt harmleſs to us: as were the ravens to Elias, the lions to Daniel, the viper to St. Paul, the fire to the three children. SERM. III.

1 Kings xvii. 6.

But eſpecially piety doth procure the friendſhip of the good angels, that puiſſant hoſt of glorious and happy ſpirits: they all do tenderly love the pious perſon; they are ever ready to ſerve and do him good, to protect him from danger, to aid him in his undertakings, to reſcue him from miſchiefs. What an honour, what a bleſſing is this, to have ſuch an innumerable company of noble friends (the courtiers and favourites of heaven) deeply concerned and conſtantly vigilant for our welfare!

Pſal. xxxiv. 7. xci. 11. Heb. i. 14.

It alſo engageth the bleſſed ſaints in glory, *the ſpirits of juſt men perfected, the church of the firſt-born*, to bear dearеſt affection to us, to further our proſperity with their good wiſhes and earneſt prayers, mightily prevalent with God.

It rendereth all ſorts of men our friends. To good men it uniteth us in holy communion; the communion of brotherly charity and hearty good will, attended with all the good offices they are able to perform: to other men it reconcileth and endeareth us; for that innocent and inoffenſive, courteous and benign, charitable and beneficent demeanour, (ſuch as piety doth require and produce,) are apt to conciliate reſpect and affection from the worſt men. For, *Vincit malos pertinax bonitas*; men hardly can perſiſt enemies to him whom they perceive to be their friend: and ſuch the pious man in diſpoſition of mind, and in effect when occaſion ſerveth, is toward all men [k]; being ſenſible of his obligation to love all men, and, *as he hath opportunity, to do good to all men.* It aſſureth and more ſtrictly endeareth our friends to us. For, as it maketh us hearty, faithful, conſtant friends to others; ſo it reciprocally tieth others to us in the like ſincerity and faſtneſs of good will.

Sen. de Benef. vii. 21.

Gal. vi. 10.

οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἡδεῖς ἀλλήλοις. *Ariſt. Eth.* viii. 4.

It reconcileth enemies. For, *when a man's ways do pleaſe the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with* [7].

Prov. xvi.

[k] Qui ſibi amicus eſt, ſcito hunc amicum omnibus eſſe. *Sen. Ep.* 6.

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him. It hath a natural efficacy to that purpose, and Divine blessing promoteth it.

By it all conversation becometh tolerable, grateful, and useful. For a pious man is not easily disturbed with any crossness or perverseness, any infirmity or impertinency of those he converseth with: he can bear the weaknesses and the failings of his company; he can by wholesome reflections upon all occurrences advantage and please himself [l].

Quæris quid profecerim? amicus esse mihi cœpi. *Sen. Ep.* 6.

In fine, piety rendereth a man a true friend and a good companion to himself; satisfied in himself, able to converse freely and pleasantly with his own thoughts. It is for the want of pious inclinations and dispositions, that solitude (a thing which sometimes cannot be avoided, which often should be embraced) is to most men so irksome and tedious, that men do carefully shun themselves, and fly from their own thoughts; that they decline all converse with their own souls, and hardly dare look upon their own hearts and consciences: whence they become aliens from home, wholly unacquainted with themselves, most ignorant of their own nearest concernments, no faithful friends or pleasant companions to themselves; so for refuge and ease they unseasonably run into idle or lewd conversation, where they disorder and defile themselves [m].

Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus.

But the pious man is, like Scipio, *never less alone, than when alone:* his solitude and retirement is not only tolerable, but commonly the most grateful and fruitful part of his life: he can ever with much pleasure, and more advantage, converse with himself; digesting and marshalling his thoughts, his affections, his purposes into good order; searching and discussing his heart, reflecting on his past

[l] Συνδιάγειν τε οὗτος ἑαυτῷ βούλεται· ἡδέως γὰρ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ.—(*Aristot. Eth.* ix. 4.) τῶν τε γὰρ πεπραγμένων ἐπιτερπεῖς αἱ μνῆμαι, καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐλπίδες ἀγαθαί.

[m] Nemo est, cui non satius sit cum quolibet esse, quam secum. *Sen. Ep.* 25.

Ἔνιοι τὸν ἴδιον βίον, ὡς ἀτερπέστατον θέαμα, προσιδεῖν οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, &c. *Plut.* περὶ Πολυπρ. p. 916.

Ζητοῦσιν οἱ μοχθηροὶ μεθ' ὧν συνημερεύσουσιν, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ φεύγουσιν. *Arist.* ix. 4.

ways, enforcing his former good reſolutions, and framing new ones; inquiring after edifying truths; ſtretching his meditations toward the beſt and ſublimeſt objects, raiſing his hopes and warming his affections towards ſpiritual and heavenly things; aſking himſelf pertinent queſtions, and reſolving incident doubts concerning his practice: in fine, converſing with his beſt friend in devotion; with admiration and love contemplating the divine perfections diſplayed in the works of nature, of providence, of grace; praiſing God for his excellent benefits and mercies; confeſſing his defects and offences; deprecating wrath and imploring pardon, with grace and ability to amend; praying for the ſupply of all his wants [n]. All which performances yield both unconceivable benefit and unexpreſſible comfort. So that ſolitude (that which is to common nature ſo offenſive, to corrupt nature ſo abominable) is to the pious man extremely commodious and comfortable: which is a great advantage peculiar to piety, and the laſt which I ſhall mention. SERM. III.

So many, and many more than I can expreſs, vaſtly great and precious advantages do accrue from piety; ſo that well may we conclude with St. Paul, that *Godlineſs is profitable for all things.*

It remaineth that, if we be wiſe, we ſhould, if we yet have it not ingraffed in us, labour to acquire it; if we have it, that we ſhould endeavour to improve it, by conſtant exerciſe, to the praiſe of God, the good of our neighbour, and our own comfort. Which that we may effectually perform, Almighty God in mercy vouchſafe, by his grace, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praiſe. *Amen.*

[n] Acquieſcit ſibi, cogitationibus ſuis traditus. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

Sapiens nunquam ſolus eſſe poteſt, habet ſecum omnes qui ſunt, quique unquam fuerunt boni; et animum liberum quocunque vult transfert: quod corpore non poteſt, cogitatione complectitur; et ſi hominum inops fuerit, loquitur cum Deo. Nunquam minus ſolus erit, quam cum ſolus fuerit. *Hier. adv. Jovin.* i. 28.

SERMON IV.

THE REWARD OF HONOURING GOD.

1 SAM. ii. 30.

For them that honour me I will honour.

SERM. IV. THE words are in the ſtricteſt ſenſe the word of God, uttered immediately by God himſelf; and may thence command from us an eſpecial attention and regard. The hiſtory of that which occaſioned them is, I preſume, well known; neither ſhall I make any deſcant or reflection thereon; but to take the words ſeparately, as a propoſition of itſelf, affording a complete inſtruction and ample matter of diſcourſe. And as ſuch, they plainly imply two things: a duty required of us to *honour God*; and a reward proffered to us, upon performance of that duty, being *honoured by God*. It is natural for us, before we are willing to undertake any work, to conſider the reward or benefit accruing from it; and it is neceſſary, before we can perform any duty, to underſtand the nature thereof. To this our method of action I ſhall ſuit the method of my diſcourſe; firſt endeavouring to eſtimate the reward, then to explain the duty. Afterward I mean to ſhew briefly why in reaſon the duty is enjoined; how in effect the reward is conferred.

I. The reward may be conſidered either abſolutely, (as what it is in itſelf;) or relatively, (as to its riſe, and whence it comes.)

1. For itſelf, it is honour; a thing, if valued according to the rate it bears in the common market, of higheſt price

among all the objects of human desire; the chief reward SERM. IV.
which the greatest actions and which the best actions do pretend unto, or are capable of; that which usually bears most sway in the hearts, and hath strongest influence upon the lives of men; the desire of obtaining and maintaining which doth commonly overbear other most potent inclinations. The love of pleasure stoops thereto: for men, to get or keep reputation, will decline the most pleasant enjoyments, will embrace the hardest pains. Yea, it often prevails over the love of life itself, which men do not only frequently expose to danger, but sometimes devote to certain loss, for its sake. If we observe what is done in the world, we may discern it to be the source of most undertakings therein: that it not only moveth the wheels of public action, (that not only for it great princes contend, great armies march, great battles are fought;) but that from it most private business derives its life and vigour: that for honour especially the soldier undergoes hardship, toil, and hazard; the scholar plods and beats his brains; the merchant runs about so busily, and adventures so far; yea, that for its sake the meanest labourer and artificer doth spend his sweat, and stretch his sinews. The principal drift of all this care and industry (the great reason of all this scuffling for power, this searching for knowledge, this scraping and scrambling for wealth) doth seem to be, that men would live in some credit, would raise themselves above contempt[1].

In such request, of such force, doth honour appear to be. If we examine why, we may find more than mere

[1] Ἴδοις δ' ἂν καὶ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν τοὺς ἀπιστοτάτους, ὑπὲρ ἄλλου μὲν οὐδενὸς ἂν τὸ ζῆν ἀντικαταλλαξαμένους· ὑπὲρ δὲ τοῦ τυχεῖν καλῆς δόξης, ἀποθνήσκειν ἐθέλοντας. *Isocr. Orat. ad Philip.*

Mors tum æquissimo animo appetitur, cum suis se laudibus vita occidens consolari potest. *Cic.* i. *Tusc.*

— Laudis avidi pecuniæ liberales erant, gloriam ingentem divitias honestas volebant; hanc ardentissime dilexerunt, propter hanc vivere voluerunt, pro hac et mori non dubitaverunt. Cæteras cupiditates hujus unius ingenti cupiditate presserunt. *Aug. de Civ. Dei*, v. 12.

Αἱ γὰρ δυνατεῖαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμήν ἐστιν αἱρετά. *Arist. Eth.* iv. 3.

Honos alit artes, omnesque incenduntur ad studia gloriæ, &c. *Cic. Tusc. Quæst.* 1.

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faſhion (or mutual imitation and conſent) to ground the experiment upon. There is one obvious reaſon why no mean regard ſhould be had thereto; its great convenience and uſefulneſs: for that a man cannot himſelf live ſafely, quietly, or pleaſantly, without ſome competent meaſure thereof; cannot well ſerve the public, perform offices of duty to his relations, of kindneſs to his friends, of charity to his neighbours, but under its protection, and with its aid: it being an engine very requiſite for the managing any buſineſs, for the compaſſing any deſign, at leaſt ſweetly and ſmoothly; it procuring to us many furtherances in our proceedings, removing divers obſtacles out of our way, guarding a man's perſon from offences, adding weight to his words, putting an edge upon his endeavours: for every one allows a favourable ear to his diſcourſe, lends an aſſiſting hand to his attempts, grants a ready credence to his teſtimony, and makes a fair conſtruction of his doings, whom he eſteems and reſpects. So is honour plainly valuable among the *bona utilia*, as no ſmall accommodation of life; and as ſuch, reaſon approves it to our judgment[m].

But ſearching farther, we ſhall find the appetite of honour to have a deeper ground, and that it is rooted even in our nature itſelf. For we may deſcry it budding forth in men's firſt infancy, (before the uſe of reaſon, or ſpeech;) even little children being ambitious to be made much of, maintaining among themſelves petty emulations and competitions, as it were about punctilios of honour. We may obſerve it growing with age, waxing bigger and ſtronger together with the increaſe of wit and knowledge, of civil culture and experience; that the matureſt age doth moſt reſent and reliſh it; that it prevails moſt in civilized nations; that men of the beſt parts, of the higheſt improve-

Vidi ego et expertus ſum zelantem parvulum, &c. *Aug.*

[m] Vide *Hier. Ep. ad Celant.*

Conſcientia nobis neceſſaria eſt, fama proxima. Qui conſcientia fidens, famam negligit, crudelis eſt. *Aug.*

Πρὸς χρείας ἀνιτηδειον ὄργανον ἡ δόξα. *Galen.*

Nec vero negligenda fama eſt; nec mediocre telum ad res gerendas exiſtimare oportet benevolentiam civium. *Cic de Amic.*

Vide *Chryſ.* tom. vi. *Orat.* 17.

ments, of the weightieſt employments, do moſt zealouſly affect it and ſtand upon it; that they who moſt ſtruggle with it do moſt feel its might, how difficult it is to reſiſt and reſtrain it, how impoſſible it is to ſtifle or extinguiſh it. For the philoſopher with all his reaſons and conſiderations cannot diſpute it down, or perſuade it away; the anchoret cannot with all his auſterities ſtarve it, or by his retirement ſhun it: no affliction, no poverty, no wretchedneſs of condition can totally ſuppreſs it. It is a ſpirit that not only haunts our courts and palaces, but frequents our ſchools and cloiſters, yea, creeps into cottages, into hoſpitals, into priſons, and even dogs men into deſarts and ſolitudes; ſo cloſe it ſticks to our nature. Plato ſaith, it is the laſt coat which a wiſe man doth put off. But I queſtion whether he could ſhew us that wiſe man who had done it, or could tell us where he dwelt, except perhaps in his own Utopian republic. For they who moſt pretend to have done it (who in their diſcourſe moſt vilify honour; who talk like Chryſippus, that a wiſe man for reputation ſake will not ſo much as ſtretch out his finger; or like Seneca, that we ſhould do every thing purely for conſcience ſake, without any regard to men's opinion; who make harangues and write volumes againſt glory[n]) do yet appear by their practice, ſometimes, by ſo doing, to aim at it: even as men do uſually complain of and eagerly quarrel with that which they moſt affect and woo. Chryſippus wrote, as we are told, above 700 books, moſt of them concerning logical quirks, and ſuch as one can hardly imagine what other drift he could have in compoſing them, beſides oſtentation of his ſubtilty and ſharpneſs of wit. Seneca, if hiſtory do not wrong him, and the face of his actions do not miſrepreſent him, was not in his heart exempt from a ſpice of ambition. Yea, that excellent emperor M. Aurelius, who would often ſpeak like a Stoic, could not but commonly act like a man, more by his practice commending honour,

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In ſolitudine ſitis ſubrepit ſuperbia. *Hier.*

Cic. de Fin. 3.

Laert.

[n] Nihil opinionis cauſa, omnia conſcientiæ faciam. *Sen. de V. B.*
Nil ſit illi cum ambitione famaque commune, ſibi placeat. *Epiſt.* 113.
Juſtum eſſe gratis oportet. *Ib.*
Id. de Ira, iii. 41.

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Tert. Apol.

than he diſparaged it in his words. For ſtory repreſents him very careful and jealous of his credit, very diligent to preſerve it and to repair it[o]. Tertullian calls ſuch philoſophers *negotiatores famæ*, merchants for fame: and it is perchance ſome part of their cunning in that trade, which makes them ſtrive to beat down the price of this commodity, that they may more eaſily engroſs it to themſelves. However, experience proves that ſuch words are but words, (words ſpoken out of affectation and pretence, rather than in good earneſt and according to truth;) that endeavours to baniſh or to extirpate this deſire are but fond and fruitleſs attempts. The reaſon why is clear: for it is as if one ſhould diſpute againſt eating and drinking, or ſhould labour to free himſelf from hunger and thirſt: the appetite of honour being indeed, as that of food, innate unto us, ſo as not to be quenched or ſmothered, except by ſome violent diſtemper or indiſpoſition of mind[p]; even by the wiſe Author of our nature originally implanted therein, for very good ends and uſes, reſpecting both the private and public benefit of men; as an engagement to virtue, and a reſtraint from vice; as an excitement of induſtry, an incentive of courage, a ſupport of conſtancy in the proſecution of worthy enterpriſes; as a ſerviceable inſtrument for the conſtitution, conſervation, and improvement of human ſociety. For did not ſome love of honour glow in men's breaſts, were that noble ſpark quite extinct, few men probably would ſtudy for honourable qualities, or perform laudable deeds; there would be nothing to keep ſome men within bounds of modeſty and decency, to deter them from doing odious and ugly things; men, not caring what others thought of them, would not regard what they did themſelves; a barbarous ſloth, or brutiſh ſtupidity, would overſpread the world, withdrawing from common life moſt of its ornaments, much of its convenience; men

Αἰδὼς δ' οἰχομένη πάντων γενέτειρα κακίστων. *Naz. Carm.* 56.

[o] Erat famæ ſuæ curioſiſſimus, et male loquentium dictis vel literis ve ſermone reſpondebat. *Capit.*

[p] Ut quidam morbo aliquo et ſenſûs ſtupore ſuavitatem cibi non ſentiunt; ſic libidinoſi, avari, facinoroſi veræ laudis guſtum non habent. *Cic. Philipp.* 2.

generally would, if not altogether ſhun ſociety, yet at leaſt decline the cares and burdens requiſite to the promoting its welfare, for the ſuſtaining which uſually the chief encouragement, the main recompenſe, is this of honour. That men therefore have ſo tender and delicate a ſenſe of their reputation, (ſo that touching it is like pricking a nerve, as ſoon felt, and as ſmartly offenſive,) is an excellent proviſion in nature; in regard whereto honour may paſs among the *bona naturalia*, as a good neceſſary for the ſatisfaction of nature, and for ſecuring the accompliſhment of its beſt deſigns. SERM. IV.

A moderate regard to honour is alſo commendable as an inſtance of humanity or good will to men, yea, as an argument of humility, or a ſober conceit of ourſelves. For to deſire another man's eſteem, and conſequently his love, (which in ſome kind or degree is an inſeparable companion of eſteem,) doth imply ſomewhat of reciprocal eſteem and affection toward him; and to prize the judgment of other men concerning us, doth ſignify, that we are not overſatisfied with our own. Negligere quid de ſe quiſque ſentiat arrogantis eſt et diſſoluti. *Cic. de Offic.* i.

We might for its farther commendation allege the authority of the more cool and candid ſort of philoſophers, (ſuch as grounded their judgment of things upon notions agreeable to common ſenſe and experience; who adapted their rules of practice to the nature of man, ſuch as they found it in the world, not ſuch as they framed it in their own fancies,) who have ranked honour among the principal of things deſirable, and adorned it with faireſt elogies; terming it a divine thing, the beſt of exterior goods, the moſt honeſt fruit and moſt ample reward of true virtue; adjudging, that to neglect the opinions of men (eſpecially of perſons worthy and laudable) is a ſign of ſtupid baſeneſs, that to contemn them is an effect of unreaſonable haughtineſs; repreſenting the love of honour (rightly grounded and duly moderated) not only as the parent and guardian (as productive and preſervative) of other virtues, but as a virtue itſelf, of no ſmall magnitude and luſtre in the conſtellation of virtues, the virtue of

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generoſity [q]. A virtue, which, next to the ſpirit of true religion, (next to a hearty reverence toward the ſupreme bleſſed Goodneſs, and that holy charity toward men, which ſpringeth thence,) doth lift a man up neareſt to heaven; doth raiſe his mind above the ſordid deſires, the ſorry cares, the fond humours, the perverſe and froward paſſions, with which men commonly are poſſeſſed and acted: that virtue, which inflames a man with courage, ſo that he dares perform what reaſon and duty require of him, that he diſdains to do what is bad or baſe; which inſpires him with ſincerity, that he values his honeſty before all other intereſts and reſpects, that he abhors to wrong or deceive, to flatter or abuſe any man, that he cannot endure to ſeem otherwiſe than he is, to ſpeak otherwiſe than he means, to act otherwiſe than he promiſes and profeſſes; which endows him with courteſy, that he is ready to yield every man his due reſpect, to afford any man what help and ſuccour he is able; that virtue, which renders a man upright in all his dealings, and correſpondent to all his obligations; a loyal ſubject to his prince, and a true lover of his country, a candid judge of perſons and things, an earneſt favourer of whatever is good and commendable, a faithful and hearty friend, a beneficial and uſeful neighbour, a grateful reſenter and requiter of courteſies, hoſpitable to the ſtranger, bountiful to the poor, kind and good to all the world: that virtue, in fine, which conſtitutes a man of honour, who ſurely is the beſt man next to a man of conſcience. Thus may honour be valued from natural light, and according to common ſenſe [r].

[q] Θεῖόν τι ἡ τιμή. *Plat. de Leg.* iv.

Καλὸν ταῖς πολλαῖς πόλεσι τὸ παρακίλευσμά ἐστι, περιτιμᾶν εὐδοξίαν περὶ τῶν πολλῶν. *Idem. de Rep.* xii.

Μέγιστον τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀγαθῶν ἡ τιμή. *Ariſt. Eth.* iv. 3.

Levis eſt animi, juſtam gloriam, qui eſt fructus virtutis honeſtiſſimus, repudiare. *Cic. in Piſ.*

Ex omnibus præmiis virtutis ampliſſimum eſt præmium gloria. *Idem pro Mil.*

[r] Trahimur omnes laudis ſtudio, et optimus quiſque maxime gloria ducitur. *Cic. pro Arch.*

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But beyond all this, the holy Scripture (that moſt certain ſtandard, by which we may examine and determine the true worth of things) doth not teach us to ſlight honour, but rather in its fit order and juſt meaſure to love and prize it. It indeed inſtructs us to ground it well, (not upon bad qualities or wicked deeds, that is villainous madneſs; not upon things of a mean and indifferent nature, that is vanity; not upon counterfeit ſhews and pretences, that is hypocriſy; but upon real worth and goodneſs, that may conſiſt with modeſty and ſobriety:) it enjoins us not to be immoderate in our deſires thereof, or complacences therein, not to be irregular in the purſuit or acquiſt of it; (to be ſo is pride and ambition;) but to affect it calmly, to purchaſe it fairly: it directs us not to make a regard thereto our chief principle, not to propound it as our main end of action: it charges us to bear contentedly the want or loſs thereof, (as of other temporal goods;) yea, in ſome caſes, for conſcience ſake, or for God's ſervice, (that is, for a good incomparably better than it,) it obliges us willingly to proſtitute and ſacrifice it, chooſing rather to be infamous than impious, (to be in diſgrace with men, rather than in disfavour with God[s]:) it, in fine, commands us to ſeek and embrace it only in ſubordination and with final reference to God's honour. Which diſtinctions and cautions being provided, honour is repreſented in holy Scripture as a thing conſiderably good, which may be regarded without blame, which ſometimes in duty muſt be regarded. It is there preferred before other good things, in themſelves not deſpicable. For, *A good name is better than precious ointment;* yea, *A good name is rather to be choſen than great riches,* ſaith the Wiſe Man. It is called a gift of God: for, *There is a man,* ſaith the Preacher, *to whom God hath given riches and honour.* Yea, not only a ſimple gift, but a bleſſing, conferred in kindneſs, as a reward and encouragement of goodneſs: for, *By humility and the fear*

Eccleſ. vii. 1. Prov. xxii. 1. Eccleſ. vi. 2. Prov. xxii. 4.

Οἱ χαρίεντες καὶ πρακτικοὶ, plauſible and active men do, ſaith Ariſtotle, place happineſs in honour. *Eth.* i. 4.

[s] Non vis eſſe juſtus ſine gloria? at mehercule ſæpe juſtus eſſe debes cum infamia. *Sen. Epiſt.* cxiii.

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Pſal. xxi. 5. in his royal hymn: *Honour,* ſaith he, *and majeſty haſt thou laid upon him.* Wiſdom alſo is deſcribed unto us bearing
Prov. iii. 16. *in her left hand riches and honour:* and Wiſdom ſurely will not take into any hand of hers, or hold therein, what is worth nothing. No: we are therefore moved to procure
Prov. iv. 8, 9. her, becauſe, *exalting her, ſhe ſhall promote us.* —*She ſhall give unto our head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory ſhall ſhe deliver to us.* We are alſo enjoined to render honour as the beſt expreſſion of good-will and gratitude toward them who beſt deſerve in themſelves, or moſt deſerve of us; to our prince, to our parents, to our prieſts,
1 Pet. ii. 17. eſpecially to ſuch of them *as govern and teach well,* to
1 Tim. v. 3. 17. all good men, (*Have ſuch in reputation,* ſays the Apoſtle.)
Phil. ii. 29. And were not honour a good thing, ſuch injunctions would be unreaſonable. Yea, becauſe we are obliged to
1 Pet. ii. 17. bear good will toward all men, St. Peter bids us to *honour all men.* From hence alſo, that we are eſpecially bound to render honour unto God himſelf, we may well infer
Ariſtot. Eth. iv. 3. with Ariſtotle, that *honour is the beſt thing in our power to offer.* To theſe conſiderations may be added, that we are
Rom. xiii. 13. commanded to walk εὐσχημόνως, (*decently,* or ſpeciouſly,
Rom. xii. 17. which implies a regard to men's opinion;) to *provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men,* (τὰ καλὰ, that is, not only things good in ſubſtance, but goodly in appearance;)
1 Pet. ii. 12. to *have our converſation honeſt before the Gentiles,* (καλὴν again, that is, fair, or comely, and plauſible, ſuch as may commend us and our profeſſion to the judgment of them
Phil. iv. 8. who obſerve us.) St. Paul alſo exhorts us to *mind,* not only *what things are true, are juſt, are pure;* but alſo ὅσα σεμνὰ, (*whatever things are venerable,* or apt to beget reſpect,) ὅσα προσφιλῆ, (*whatever things are lovely,* or gracious in men's eyes and eſteem,) ὅσα εὔφημα, (*whatever things are well reported, or well reputed of.*) He requires us not only, *if there be any virtue,* (any thing very good in itſelf,) but, *if there be any praiſe,* (any thing much approved in common eſteem,) that we ſhould *mind ſuch*

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things. Laſtly, the bleſſed ſtate hereafter (the higheſt inſtance of divine bounty, the complete reward of goodneſs) is repreſented and recommended to us as a ſtate of honour and glory; to be ambitious whereof is the character of a good man. *To every man,* ſaith St. Paul, *ſhall God render according to his works: to them, who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.* Rom. ii. 6, 7.

Such is the reward propounded to us in itſelf; no vile or contemptible thing, but upon various accounts much valuable; that which the common apprehenſions of men, plain dictates of reaſon, a predominant inſtinct of nature, the judgments of very wiſe men, and divine atteſtation itſelf conſpire to commend unto us as very conſiderable and precious. Such a reward our text preſcribes us the certain, the only way of attaining.

2. Such a benefit is here tendered to us (that which yet more highly commends it, and exceedingly enhances its worth) by God himſelf: *I,* ſaith he, *will honour.* It is ſanctified by coming from his holy hand; it is dignified by following his moſt wiſe and juſt diſpoſal; it is fortified and aſſured by depending on his unqueſtionable word, and uncontrollable power: who, as he is the prime Author of all good, ſo he is in eſpecial manner the ſovereign diſpenſer of honour. *The king,* we ſay, *is the fountain of honour.* What any king, as the repreſentative and delegate of God, is in his particular kingdom, that is almighty God abſolutely and independently in all the world. *Both riches and honour,* ſaid good king David, *come of thee, for thou ruleſt over all: in thine hand is power and might; in thine hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all.* 1 Chron. xxix. 12. He whoſe grants are in effect only ſure and valid, whoſe favours only do in the end turn to good account, he freely offers us moſt deſirable preferment: he doth himſelf graciouſly hold forth moſt authentic patents, by virtue of which we may all become *right honourable,* and *perſons of quality indeed;* having not only the names and titles, the outward enſigns and badges of dignity, (ſuch as earthly princes confer,) but

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the ſubſtantial reality, the aſſured enjoyment thereof. (For man can only impoſe law upon tongues and geſtures; God alone commandeth and inclineth hearts, wherein honour chiefly reſideth.) He offers it, I ſay, moſt freely indeed, yet not abſolutely: he doth not go to ſell it for a price, yet he propounds it under a condition; as a moſt juſt and equal, ſo a very gentle and eaſy condition. It is but an exchange of honour for honour; of honour from God, which is a free gift, for honour from us, which is a juſt duty; of honour from him our ſovereign Lord, for honour from us his poor vaſſals; of honour from the moſt high Majeſty of heaven, for honour from us vile worms, creeping upon the earth. Such an overture one would think it not only reaſonable to accept, but impoſſible to refuſe. For can any man dare not to honour invincible power, infallible wiſdom, inflexible juſtice? Will any man forbear to honour immenſe goodneſs and bounty? Yes, it ſeems there are men ſo mad as to reject ſo fair an offer; ſo bad as to neglect ſo equal a duty. Let us therefore conſider what it is that is here required of us, or wherein this honouring of God conſiſts, that we may thereby diſcern when we perform this duty, when we are deficient therein.

II. There are ſeveral ways of honouring God, or ſeveral parts and degrees of this duty; all which we may refer to two ſorts, conceiving the duty as a compound, made up of two main ingredients, (correſpondent to thoſe two parts in which they reſide, and of which our nature conſiſts; which diſtinction St. Paul ſuggeſteth, when he ſaith, *Glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's*,) one of them being, as it were, the form and ſoul, the other as the matter and body of the duty.

1 Cor. vi. 20.

1. The ſoul of that honour which is required of us toward God, is that internal eſteem and reverence which we ſhould bear in our hearts towards him; importing that we have impreſſed upon our minds ſuch conceptions about him as are worthy of him, ſuitable to the perfection of his nature, to the eminency of his ſtate, to the juſt quality of his works and actions: that we apprehend him to be, what he really is, in his nature, ſuperlatively good;

wiſe, powerful, holy, and juſt: that we aſcribe unto him the production and conſervation of all beings, together with an entire ſuperintendency over, and abſolute diſpoſal of, all events: that we conceive ourſelves obliged to ſubmit unto, and acquieſce in, all his diſpenſations of providence, as moſt wiſe and moſt righteous; to rely upon the declarations of his mind, (whether in way of aſſertion, or promiſe,) as infallibly true and certain. In ſuch acts of mind the honouring of God doth primarily conſiſt. In acts, I ſay: not in ſpeculative opinions concerning the divine excellencies, (ſuch as all men have, who are not downright atheiſts or infidels, floating in the fancy, or dormant in the mind; but in continually preſent, lively, effectual acts of apprehenſion and judgment, ſinking down into the heart and affections, and quickening them to a congruous, real performance. Such an apprehenſion of God's power, as ſhall make us to dread his irreſiſtible hand, ſhall cauſe us to deſpair of proſpering in bad courſes, ſhall diſpoſe us to confide in him, as able to perform whatever he wills us to expect from him: ſuch an opinion of his wiſdom, as ſhall keep us from queſtioning whether that is beſt which God declares to be ſo; as ſhall hinder us from preſuming (in compliance with our own ſhallow reaſon, or vain fancy) to do any thing againſt God's judgment and advice: ſuch a conceit of God's juſtice, as ſhall render us careful to perform what his law promiſes to reward, and fearful to commit what it threatens to puniſh: ſuch a perſuaſion concerning God's goodneſs, as ſhall kindle in us an hearty affection toward him, ſhall make us very ſenſible of his bounty, and ready to yield returns of duty and gratitude unto him; as ſhall preſerve us from being diſtruſtful of his providence, or doubtful in our need and diſtreſs of finding relief from him: ſuch a vigorous and fruitful eſteem of God in all reſpects, as ſhall produce in us diſpoſitions of mind, and actions of life, agreeable to our various relations and obligations to him; becoming us as his creatures and children, as his ſubjects and ſervants. This is indeed the ſoul of the duty, which being abſent, all exterior (how ſpecious

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ſoever) either profeſſions or performances, are but as pictures, having in them ſomewhat of reſemblance in ſhape and colour, nothing of life: yea rather, as carcaſes, not only dead and ſenſeleſs, but rotten and filthy in God's ſight. *This people*, ſaith God, *do honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* Such honour is indeed no honour at all, but impudent abuſe and profane mockery: for what can be more abominably vain, than for a man to court and cajole him who knows his whole heart, who ſees that he either minds not, or means not what he ſays? It behoves us therefore by all proper means, by contemplating the works and actions of God, (his admirable works of nature, the wiſe proceedings of his providence, the glorious diſpenſations of his grace,) by meditating on his word, by praying for his grace, by obſerving his law and will, to raiſe up in our hearts, to foment and cheriſh this internal reverence, which is the true ſpring of all piety, the principle which forms and actuates that other ſort, coming next to be touched on, being the body of our due honour to God; concurring in its order to the integrity thereof, as without which the interior part would be a kind of ghoſt, too thin in ſubſtance, too remote from ſenſe, too deſtitute of good fruit and uſe.

Matt. xv. 8.

2. This bodily part conſiſts in outward expreſſions and performances, whereby we declare our eſteem and reverence of God, and produce or promote the like in others. For our thus honouring God reſpects thoſe two ends and effects, the uttering our own, the exciting in others a reverence toward him. And it we may firſt view in the general, or groſs bulk thereof; then ſurvey its principal members.

Firſt, in general, God is honoured by a willing and careful practice of all piety and virtue for conſcience ſake, or in avowed obedience to his holy will. This is the moſt natural expreſſion of our reverence toward him, and the moſt effectual way of promoting the ſame in others. A ſubject cannot better demonſtrate the reverence he bears toward his prince, than by (with a cheerful diligence) obſerving his laws; for by ſo doing he declares that he acknowledgeth the authority, and revereth the

majeſty, which enacted them; that he approves the wiſ- SERM. dom which deviſed them, and the goodneſs which deſigned IV. them for public benefit; that he dreads his prince's power, which can maintain them, and his juſtice, which will vindicate them; that he relies upon his fidelity, in making good what of protection or of recompenſe he propounds to the obſervers of them. No leſs pregnant a ſignification of our reverence toward God do we yield in our gladly and ſtrictly obeying his laws; thereby evidencing our ſubmiſſion to God's ſovereign authority, our eſteem of his wiſdom and goodneſs, our awful regard to his power and juſtice, our confidence in him, and dependance upon his word. As alſo the practice of wholeſome laws, viſibly producing good fruits, (peace and proſperity in the commonwealth,) doth conciliate reſpect unto the prince, he thereby appearing wiſe and good, able to diſcern, and willing to chooſe what confers to public benefit: ſo actions conformable to the divine law, being (by God's wiſe and gracious diſpoſal) both in themſelves comely and lovely, and in effect, as St. Paul ſaith, *good and profitable to men*, conducing indeed not only to private, but alſo to public welfare, to the rendering human ſociety comfortable, to the ſettling and ſecuring common tranquillity, the performance of them muſt needs bring great commendation to the author and ordainer of them. By obſerving them we ſhall, as St. Peter ſpeaks, *ſet forth the virtues of him that called us* to ſuch a practice. The light and luſtre of good works, done in regard to divine command, will cauſe men to ſee clearly the excellencies of our moſt wiſe and gracious Lord; will conſequently induce and excite them *to glorify our Father which is in heaven*. *In this*, ſaith our Saviour, *is my Father glorified, if you bear much fruit*. The goodlineſs to the ſight, the pleaſantneſs to the taſte, which is ever perceptible in thoſe fruits which genuine piety beareth, the beauty men ſee in a calm mind and a ſober converſation, the ſweetneſs they taſte from works of juſtice and charity, will certainly produce veneration to the doctrine which teacheth ſuch things, and to the authority which enjoins them. It is

Tit. iii. 8. Neh. ix. 18. Deut. x. 18.

1 Pet. ii. 9.

Matt. v. 16.

Joh. xv. 8.

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an aggravation of impiety, often inſiſted upon in Scripture, that it ſlurs, as it were, and defames God, brings reproach and obloquy upon him, cauſes his name to be profaned, to be curſed, to be blaſphemed: and it is anſwerably a commendation of piety, that by the practice thereof we (not only procure many great advantages to ourſelves, many bleſſings and comforts here, all joys and felicities hereafter: but do alſo thereby) beget eſteem to God himſelf, and ſanctify his ever-bleſſed name; cauſe him to be regarded and reverenced, his name to be praiſed and bleſſed among men. It is by exemplary piety, by *providing things honeſt in the ſight of all men*, by doing things honourable and laudable, (ſuch are all things which God hath been pleaſed to command us,) that we ſhall be ſure to fulfil that precept of St. Paul, of *doing all things to the glory of God*; which is the body of that duty we ſpeak of.

Rom. ii. 23. Tit. ii. 5. 2 Sam. xii. 14. Iſa. lii. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Eph. iv. 1. Phil. i. 27. Col. i. 10. 1 Theſſ. ii. 12. Rom. xii. 17. 1 Cor. x. 31.

Secondly, But there are, deſerving a particular inſpection, ſome members thereof, which in a peculiar and eminent manner do conſtitute this honour; ſome acts which more ſignally conduce to the illuſtration of God's glory. Such are,

1. The frequent and conſtant performance (in a ſerious and reverent manner) of all religious duties, or devotions immediately addreſſed to God, or converſant about him: that which the Pſalmiſt ſtyles, *Giving the Lord the honour due to his name, worſhipping the Lord in the beauty of holineſs.*

Pſal. xxix. 2.

2. Uſing all things peculiarly related unto God, his holy name, his holy word, his holy places, (the places *where his honour dwelleth*,) his holy times, (religious faſts and feſtivities,) with eſpecial reſpect.

Pſal. xxvi. 8. Iſa. lviii. 13.

3. Yielding due obſervance to the deputies and miniſters of God (both civil and eccleſiaſtical) as ſuch, or becauſe of their relation to God: the doing of which God declares that he interprets and accepts as done unto himſelf.

Rom. xiii. 4. Mal. ii. 7. 1 Sam. viii. 7. Matt. x. 40. John xiii. 20.

4. Freely ſpending what God hath given us (out of reſpect unto him) in works of piety, charity, and mercy;

2 Cor. ix. 13.

that which the Wiſe Man calls, *honouring the Lord with our ſubſtance.* SERM. IV.

5. All penitential acts, by which we ſubmit unto God, and humble ourſelves before him. As Achan, by confeſſing of his ſin, is ſaid to *give glory to the Lord God of Iſrael.* Prov. iii. 9. xiv. 31. Joſh. vii. 19. Apoc. xvi. 9.

6. Cheerful undergoing afflictions, loſſes, diſgraces, for the profeſſion of God's truth, or for obedience to God's commands. (As St. Peter is ſaid *by his death,* ſuffered upon ſuch accounts, *to glorify God.*) John xxi. 19.

Theſe ſignal inſtances of this duty (repreſented as ſuch in holy Scripture) for brevity's ſake I paſs over; craving leave only to conſider one, moſt pertinent to our preſent buſineſs, and indeed a very comprehenſive one; which is this:

7. We ſhall eſpecially honour God, by diſcharging faithfully thoſe offices which God hath intruſted us with; by improving diligently thoſe talents which God hath committed to us; by uſing carefully thoſe means and opportunities which God hath vouchſafed us, of doing him ſervice, and promoting his glory. Thus he to whom God hath given wealth, if he expend it (not to the nouriſhment of pride and luxury, not only to the gratifying his own pleaſure or humour, but) to the furtherance of God's honour, or to the ſuccour of his indigent neighbour, (in any pious or charitable way,) he doth thereby in eſpecial manner honour God. He alſo on whom God hath beſtowed wit and parts, if he employ them (not ſo much in contriving projects to advance his own petty intereſts, or in procuring vain applauſe to himſelf, as) in advantageouſly ſetting forth God's praiſe, handſomely recommending goodneſs, dexterouſly engaging men in ways of virtue, (doing which things is true wit and excellent policy indeed,) he doth thereby remarkably honour God. He likewiſe that hath honour conferred upon him, if he ſubordinate it to God's honour, if he uſe his own credit as an inſtrument of bringing credit to goodneſs, thereby adorning and illuſtrating piety, he by ſo doing doth eminently practiſe this duty. The like may be ſaid of any other good quality, any ca-

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pacity or advantage of doing good; by the right uſe thereof we honour God: for that men, beholding the worth of ſuch good gifts, and feeling the benefit emergent from them, will be apt to bleſs the donor of them; as did they in the Goſpel, who, ſeeing our Saviour cure the paralytic man, did preſently *glorify God, who had given ſuch power unto men.* But eſpecially they to whom power and authority is committed, as they have the chief capacity, ſo they are under an eſpecial obligation thus to honour God: they are particularly concerned to hear and obſerve that royal proclamation, *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and ſtrength; give unto the Lord the honour due unto his name.* When ſuch perſons (like King Nebuchadnezzar returned to his right ſenſes) do ſeriouſly acknowledge their power and eminency derived from God alone; when they profeſs ſubjection unto him, and expreſs it in their practice, not only driving others by their power, but drawing them by their example, to piety and goodneſs; when they cauſe God's name to be duly worſhipped, and his laws to be ſtrictly obſerved; when they favour and encourage virtue, diſcourage and chaſtiſe wickedneſs; when they take care that juſtice be impartially adminiſtered, innocence protected, neceſſity relieved, all iniquity and oppreſſion, all violence and diſorder, yea, ſo much as may be, all affliction and wretchedneſs be prevented, or removed; when they by all means ſtrive to promote both the ſervice of God, and the happineſs of men, (*diſpenſing* equally and benignly to the family over which their Lord hath ſet them, *their meat in due ſeaſon;* providing that men under them *may live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godlineſs and honeſty;* doing which is the buſineſs allotted to them, the intereſt, as it were, of God, which he declares himſelf concernedly to tender, and by their miniſtry to proſecute;) when they carefully do ſuch things, then do they indeed approve themſelves worthy honourers of their high Maſter and heavenly King; then do they truly act God's part, and repreſent his perſon decently. When the actions of theſe viſible gods are ſo divinely good and beneficial, men will be eaſily induced, yea, can

Matt. ix. 8.

Pſal. xxix. 1, 2.

Dan. iv. 34. I bleſſed the moſt High, and praiſed and honoured him, &c.

Matt. xxiv. 45.

1 Tim. ii. 2.

hardly forbear to reverence and magnify the invisible Founder of their authority. By so doing, as they will set before men's eyes the best pattern of loyalty; as they will impress upon men's hearts the strongest argument for obedience and respect toward themselves; as they shall both more plainly inform and more effectually persuade people to the performance of their duty unto them, than by all the law and all the force in the world; as they will thereby consequently best secure and maintain their own honour, and their own welfare, (for men will never be heartily loyal and submissive to authority, till they become really good; nor will they ever be very good, till they see their leaders such:) so they will together greatly advance the praise and glory of him in whose name they rule, to whose favour they owe their power and dignity; *in whose hand*, as the Prophet saith, *is their breath, and whose are all their ways.* For all men will be ready most awfully to dread him, unto whom they see princes themselves humbly to stoop and bow; no man will be ashamed or unwilling to serve him, whom he shall observe that his lords and governors do concern themselves to worship: the world cannot but have a good opinion of him, a participation of whose power and majesty yields such excellent fruits; it will not fail to adore him, whose shadows and images are so venerable. It is a most notorious thing, both to reason and in experience, what extreme advantage great persons have, especially by the influence of their practice, to bring God himself, as it were, into credit: how much it is in their power easily to render piety a thing in fashion and request. For in what they do, they never are alone, or are ill attended; whither they go, they carry the world along with them: they lead crowds of people after them, as well when they go in the right way, as when they run astray. The custom of living well, no less than other modes and garbs, will be soon conveyed and propagated from the court; the city and country will readily draw good manners thence, (good manners truly so called, not only superficial forms of civility, but real

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Dan. v. 23.

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practices of goodneſs.) For the main body of men goeth not *qua eundum, ſed qua itur,* not according to rules and reaſons, but after examples and authorities; eſpecially of great perſons, who are like ſtars, ſhining in high and conſpicuous places, by which men ſteer their courſe: their actions are to be reckoned not as ſingle or ſolitary ones, but are, like their perſons, of a public and repreſentative nature, involving the practice of others, who are by them awed, or ſhamed into compliance. Their good example eſpecially hath this advantage, that men can find no excuſe, can have no pretence why they ſhould not follow it. Piety is not only beautified, but fortified by their dignity; it not only ſhines in them with a clearer luſtre, but with a mightier force and influence: a word, a look (the leaſt intimation) from them will do more good, than others' beſt eloquence, cleareſt reaſon, moſt earneſt endeavours. For it is in them, if they would apply themſelves to it, as the wiſeſt prince implies, to *ſcatter iniquity with their eyes.* A ſmile of theirs were able to enliven virtue, and diffuſe it all about; a frown might ſuffice to mortify and diſſipate wickedneſs. Such apparently is their power of honouring God; and in proportion thereto ſurely great is their obligation to do it: of them peculiarly God expects it, and all equity exacts it. What the meaner rank of ſervants (who are employed in baſer drudgeries, whoſe fare is more coarſe, whoſe wages are more ſcant, who ſtand at greater diſtance from their lord, and receive no ſuch ample or expreſs marks of his favour, what theſe) do is of ſome conſequence indeed, but doth not import ſo much to the maſter's reputation; their good word concerning him, their good carriage toward him doth not credit him ſo much. But thoſe whom he employs in matters of higheſt truſt and importance to his affairs, whom he places in the neareſt degree to himſelf, (ſeats even in his own throne, upon his own tribunal,) whom he feeds plentifully and daintily, maintains in a handſome garb, allows largely, as their deportment doth much reflect on their lord's eſteem, as they are highly capable of advancing his repute;

Prov. xx. 8.

ſo all the rules of ingenuity and gratitude, all the laws of juſtice and equity do oblige them earneſtly to endeavour it. And it is indeed no leſs their concernment to do ſo. For if there be diſorders, prejudicial to the maſter's honour and intereſt, frequently committed in the family, it is thoſe ſervants muſt be reſponſible: if due order be there kept to his glory and advantage, they ſhall chiefly be commended, and peculiarly hear the *Euge, bone ſerve.* They muſt be loaded with other men's faults, or crowned for other men's virtues, as their behaviour hath reſpectively contributed to them. Thoſe univerſal rules of equity, propoſed in the Goſpel, will, in God's reckoning with and requiting men, be punctually obſerved: *to whomſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required;* anſwerable to the improvement of what is delivered in truſt ſhall the acceptance be. SERM. IV. Matt. xxv. 23. Luke xii. 48.

I have inſiſted ſomewhat more largely on this point, becauſe our text hath a particular aſpect thereon; the words being uttered upon occaſion of Eli, then judge in Iſrael, his not uſing authority to theſe purpoſes; his forbearing to redreſs a grievous abuſe, committed by his own ſons, to the diſſervice and diſhonour of God. Whence to perſons of his rank is this law eſpecially directed; upon them is this duty chiefly incumbent; on them aſſuredly, (as ſure as God is true,) if they will obſerve the duty, the reward ſhall be conferred. God will certainly not only preſerve the honour they have already, but will accumulate more honours on them.

Theſe are general truths; the particular application of them is ours. God, I pray, vouchſafe his grace and bleſſing, that it may be made to our benefit and comfort.

III. I ſhould now ſhew why the duty is required of us, or how reaſonable it is. I muſt not (and the matter is ſo palpable that I need not) ſpend many words on that. God ſurely doth not exact honour from us becauſe he needs it, becauſe he is the better for it, becauſe he, for itſelf, delights therein. For (beſide that he cannot want any thing without himſelf, that he cannot any wiſe need

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mortal breath to praiſe him [a], or hands of fleſh to ſerve him, who hath millions of better creatures than we abſolutely at his devotion, and can with a word create millions of millions more, fitter than we to honour him) the beſt eſtimation we can have of him is much below him; the beſt expreſſion we can make is very unworthy of him. He is infinitely excellent, beyond what we can imagine or declare: his *name is exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe; his glory is above the earth and heaven.* So that all our endeavours to honour him are, in compariſon to what is due, but defects, and in a manner diſparagements to him. It is only then (which ſhould affect our ingenuity to conſider) his pure goodneſs that moves him, for our benefit and advantage, to demand it of us.

Neh. ix. 5. Pſ. cxlviii. 13. Ecclus. xliii. 30.

1. For that to honour God is the moſt proper work of reaſon; that for which primarily we were deſigned and framed; (for as other things were made to afford the matter and occaſion, ſo man was deſigned to exerciſe the act of glorifying God:) whence the performance thereof doth preſerve and perfect our nature; to neglect it being unnatural and monſtrous.

Sen. Ep. 76.

2. For that alſo it is a moſt pleaſant duty. He is not a man, (hath loſt all natural ingenuity and humanity,) who doth not delight to make ſome returns thither, where he hath found much good will, whence he hath felt great kindneſs. Since then all the good we have, we have received from God's favour, it cannot but be very pleaſant to render ſomewhat of requital, as it were, unto him; and we can render no other but this. We cannot make God more rich, more joyful, more happy than he is: all that we can do is, to expreſs our reverence toward him.

3. For that likewiſe our honouring God diſpoſes us to the imitation of him, (for what we do reverence we would reſemble,) that is, to the doing thoſe things wherein our chief perfection and happineſs conſiſts, whence our beſt content and joy doth ſpring.

[a] Ἀκήρατος γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἀνενδεὴς οὖσα, οὐδενὸς ἑτέρου προσδεῖται· οἱ δὲ αἰνοῦντες αὐτὸν λαμπρότεροι γίνονται. *Chryſoſt. in Pſal.* cxliv. *et vide in Pſal.* ciii

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4. In fine, for that the practice of this duty is moſt profitable and beneficial to us; unto it by an eternal rule of juſtice our final welfare and proſperity being annexed: whence God hath declared it to be the way and condition of our attaining that thing which we ſo like and prize, honour to ourſelves; the which by promiſe he hath engaged himſelf to confer on thoſe who honour him. And,

IV. This promiſe he makes good ſeveral ways: ſome of them I ſhall briefly ſuggeſt.

1. The honouring God is of itſelf an honourable thing; the employment which ennobles heaven itſelf, wherein the higheſt angels do rejoice and glory. It is the greateſt honour of a ſervant to bring credit to his maſter, of a ſubject to ſpread his prince's renown, and (upon grounds vaſtly more obliging) of a creature to glorify his Maker: that we may do ſo is an honour we ſhould be glad, may be proud of.

2. By honouring God we are immediately inſtated in great honour; we enter into moſt noble relations, acquire moſt illuſtrious titles, enjoy moſt glorious privileges; we become the friends and favourites of heaven, are adopted into God's family, and are ſtyled his children; do obtain a free acceſs unto him, a ſure protection under him, a ready aſſiſtance from him in all our needs. And what honour can exceed, can equal this?

3. God hath ſo ordered it, that honour is naturally conſequent upon the honouring him. God hath made goodneſs a noble and a ſtately thing; hath impreſſed upon it that beauty and majeſty which commands an univerſal love and veneration, which ſtrikes preſently both a kindly and an awful reſpect into the minds of all men. *The righteous is* (not only in himſelf, but in common eſteem) *more excellent than his neighbour.* Power may be dreaded, riches may be courted, wit and knowledge may be admired; but only goodneſs is truly eſteemed and honoured [b]. Not only men of goodneſs and diſcretion, but

Prov. xii. 26.

[b] Τίνων τοῦ πλησίον τιμιώτερος ἢ τοῦ φανῆναι χρηστότερος, &c. *Nam. Orat. de Paup.*

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even the vulgar ſort of men (yea, as Plato hath well obſerved, the worſt men) do paſs this judgment, do prefer true goodneſs above all things [c].

4. God, by his extraordinary providence, as there is reaſon and occaſion, doth interpoſe, ſo as to procure honour to them, to maintain and further their reputation, who honour him. God *faſhioneth the hearts of men: the hearts* of the greateſt men *are in his hand; he turneth them as the rivers of waters, whitherſoever he will:* he conſequently raiſeth or depreſſeth us, as he pleaſes, in the judgments and affections of men. *When a man's ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,* ſaith the Wiſe Man; that is, he diſpoſeth the moſt averſe minds to love and honour him. No envy can ſupplant, no ſlander can deface the credit of ſuch a perſon; ſince God hath taken it into his charge and care, ſince he hath ſaid it, that *he will bring forth his righteouſneſs as the light, and his judgment as the noon day.* God alſo by ſecret methods, and undiſcernible trains, ordereth all events, managing our thoughts and deſigns, our enterpriſes and actions ſo, that the reſult of them ſhall be matter of benefit, comfort, and reputation, or of diſaſter, regret, and diſgrace, as he thinks good. Victory and ſucceſs he abſolutely diſpoſeth of, and conſequently of the honour that follows them; and they do uſually attend the honours of God: for, as it is in the Pſalm, *a good ſucceſs have they who keep his commandments.* Many are the inſtances of perſons, (ſuch as Abraham, Joſeph, Moſes, David, Job, and Daniel,) who, for their ſignal honouring of God, from a baſe and obſcure, or from an afflicted and forlorn condition, have, in ways ſtrange and wonderful, been advanced to eminent dignity, have been rendered

Pſ. xxxiii. 15. Prov. xxi. 1.

Prov. xvi. 7.

Pſ. xxxvii. 6. Pſ. xxx. 7. xc. 17.

Pſ. cxi. 10. Prov. iii. 4.

Is gloria maxime excellit, qui virtute plurimum præſtat. *Cic.*

Κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὁ ἀγαθὸς μόνος τιμητός. *Ariſt. Eth.* iv. 3.

Adeo gratioſa virtus eſt, ut inſitum ſit etiam malis probare meliora. *Sen. de Benef.* iv. 17.

[c] Θεῖόν τι καὶ ἐυτοχόν ἐστι καὶ τοῖς κακοῖς· ὅστε πάμπολλα τῶν σφόδρα κακῶν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις καὶ ταῖς δόξαις διαῤῥῦνται τὰς ἀμείνους τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τοὺς χείρους. *Plat. de Repub.* xii.

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moſt illuſtrious, by the providence of him, who *raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth the beggar out of the dunghill, to ſet them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.* He doth it in an evident manner, and eminent degree, to ſome; he doth it in a convenient way, and competent meaſure, to all that honour him.

Pſ. cvii. 41. 1 Sam. ii. 8.

5. Whereas men are naturally inclined to bear much regard to the judgment of poſterity concerning them, are deſirous to leave a good name behind them, and to have their memory retained in eſteem: God ſo diſpoſes things, that *the memory of the juſt ſhall be bleſſed;* that *his righteouſneſs ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance;* that *his light ſhall rejoice,* (or burn clearly and pleaſantly, even when his life is put out here.) [d] No ſpices can ſo embalm a man, no monument can ſo preſerve his name and memory, as a pious converſation, whereby God hath been honoured, and men benefited. The fame of ſuch a perſon is, in the beſt judgments, far more precious and truly glorious, than is the fame of thoſe who have excelled in any other deeds or qualities. For what ſober man doth not in his thoughts afford a more high and hearty reſpect to thoſe poor fiſhermen, who by their heroical activity and patience did honour God in the propagation of his heavenly truth, than to all thoſe Hectors in chivalry, thoſe conquerors and achievers of mighty exploits, (thoſe Alexanders and Cæſars,) who have been renowned for doing things which ſeemed great, rather than for performing what was truly good? To the honour of thoſe excellent poor men, conſpicuous monuments have been erected every where; anniverſary memorials of their names and virtues are celebrated; they are never mentioned or thought of without reſpect; their commendations are interwoven with the praiſes of their great Lord and Maker, whom they honoured [e].

Cic. Tuſc. 1.

Prov. x. 7. Pſ. cxii. 6. Prov. xiii. 9.

[d] Ἀνάγκη, ὡς ἔοικε, μίλειν ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦ ἥκιστα χρόνου· ἐπειδὴ καὶ συγχάνουσι κατά τινα φύσιν, οἱ μὲν ἀνδραποδωδίσαται, οὐδὲν φροντίζοντες αὐτοῦ· οἱ δ' ἐπιεικίσαται, πᾶν ποιοῦντες ὅπως ἐν εἰς τὸν ἥκιστα χρόνον εὖ ἀκούσωσιν. *Plat. Epiſt.* ii.

[e] Τῶν δὲ δούλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τὰ σήματα λαμπρὰ, καὶ ἡμέραι καταφανεῖς, ἑορτὴν ἐξ οἰκουμένης ποιοῦσαι, &c. *Chryſ. in* 2 *Cor. Or.* 27.

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6. Laſtly, to thoſe who honour God here, God hath reſerved an honour infinitely great and excellent, in compariſon whereto all honours here are but dreams, the loudeſt acclamations of mortal men are but empty ſounds, the brighteſt glories of this world are but duſkiſh and fleeting ſhadows; an honour moſt ſolid, moſt durable; *an eternal weight of glory*. They ſhall, in the face of all the world, be approved by the moſt righteous Judge's unqueſtionable ſentence; they ſhall be eſteemed in the unanimous opinion of angels and ſaints; they ſhall be applauded by the general voice and atteſtation of heaven; they ſhall then be ſeated upon unmoveable thrones, their heads encircled with unfading crowns, their faces ſhining with rays of unconceivable glory and majeſty. The leſs of honour they have received here, in this tranſitory moment of life, the more thereof they ſhall enjoy in that future eternal ſtate; where, with him who, through the whole courſe of his life, *ſought not his own honour, but the honour of him that ſent him*; who, *for the ſuffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour*; who, *for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet at the right hand of God*; with thoſe who conſecrated all their endeavours, and who ſacrificed their lives to the promoting of God's honour, they ſhall poſſeſs everlaſting glory. Which, together with them, God Almighty of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom, with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be for ever all honour and praiſe. Amen.

2 Cor. iv. 17.

John viii. 49, 50. Heb. ii. 9. xii. 2.

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UPRIGHT WALKING SURE WALKING.

PROV. x. 9.

He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely.

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THE world is much addicted to the politics; the heads of men are very buſy in contrivance, and their mouths are full of talk about the ways of conſulting our ſafety, and ſecuring our intereſts. May we not therefore preſume, that an infallible maxim of policy, propoſing the moſt expedite and certain method of ſecurity in all our tranſactions, will be entertained with acceptance? Such an one the greateſt politician and wiſeſt man for buſineſs (if we may take God's own word for it) that ever was or will be, doth here ſuggeſt to us. For the practice couched in our text he otherwhere voucheth for a point of policy, telling us, that, *A man of underſtanding walketh uprightly*: and here he recommendeth it as a method of ſecurity, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely*.

1 Kings iii. 12.

Prov. xv. 21.

Treating upon which *aphoriſm*, I ſhall, by God's help, endeavour, firſt, in way of explication, briefly to deſcribe the practice itſelf; then, in way of proof, by ſome conſiderations to declare, that ſecurity doth attend it.

For explication. *To walk* (as well in the ſtyle of holy Scripture, as in other writings, and even in common ſpeech) doth ſignify our uſual courſe of dealing, or the conſtant tenor of our practice.

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Uprightly, according to the original, might be rendered, *in perfection*, or *with integrity*: and by the Greek תמים tranſlators in ſeveral places is ſuppoſed chiefly to denote ſincerity and purity of intention.

He that walketh in his uprightneſs, feareth the Lord. Prov. xiv. 2.

In effect, the phraſe, *He that walketh uprightly*, doth import, one who is conſtantly diſpoſed in his deſigns and dealings to bear a principal regard to the rules of his duty, and the dictates of his conſcience; who in every caſe emergent is ready to perform that, which upon good deliberation doth appear moſt juſt and fit, in conformity to God's law and ſound reaſon, without being ſwayed by any appetite, any paſſion, any ſiniſter reſpect to his own private intereſt of profit, credit, or pleaſure, to the commiſſion of any unlawful, irregular, unworthy, or baſe act; who generally doth act out of good principles; (namely, reverence to God, charity to men, ſober regard to his own true welfare;) who doth aim at good ends, that is, at God's honour, public benefit, his own ſalvation, other good things ſubordinate to thoſe, or well conſiſtent with them; who doth proſecute his deſigns by lawful means, in fair ways, ſuch as honeſt providence and induſtry, veracity and fidelity, dependence upon God's help, and prayer for his bleſſing: in ſhort, one who never adviſedly doth undertake any bad thing, nor any good thing to ill purpoſes; nor doth uſe any foul means to compaſs his intents.

For proof. That ſuch an one doth ever proceed with much ſecurity, from the following conſiderations may appear.

I. An upright walker is ſecure of eaſily finding his way. For it commonly requireth no reach of wit or depth of judgment, no laborious diligence of inquiry, no curious intentneſs of obſervation, no ſolicitous care, or plodding ſtudy, to diſcern in any caſe what is juſt; we need not much trouble our heads about it, for we can hardly be to ſeek for it. If we will but open our eyes, it lieth in view before us, being the plain, ſtraight, obvious road, which common reaſon prompteth, or which ordinary inſtruction pointeth out to us: ſo that uſually that di-

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rection of Solomon is ſufficient, *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look ſtraight before thee.—Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left.* Prov. iv. 25. 27. xvii. 24. xiv. 6.

The ways of iniquity and vanity, (if we may call them *ways*, which indeed are but exorbitances and ſeductions from the way,) ill deſigns and bad means of executing deſigns, are very unintelligible, very obſcure, abſtruſe, and intricate; being infinitely various, and utterly uncertain: ſo that out of them to pick and fix on this or that may puzzle our heads, and perplex our hearts; as to purſue any of them may involve us in great difficulty and trouble. But the ways of truth, of right, of virtue, are ſo very ſimple and uniform, ſo fixed and permanent, ſo clear and notorious, that we can hardly miſs them, or (except wilfully) ſwerve from them. For they by divine wiſdom were chalked out, not only for ingenious and ſubtile perſons, (men of great parts, of refined wits, of long experience,) but rather for the vulgar community of men, the great body of God's ſubjects, conſiſting in perſons of meaneſt capacity, and ſmalleſt improvement: being deſigned to *make wiſe the ſimple*, to *give the young man knowledge and diſcretion:* to direct all ſorts of people in their duty, toward their happineſs; according to that in the Prophet, *A high way ſhall be there, and it ſhall be called, The way of holineſs—the way-faring men, though fools, ſhall not err therein.* Pſal. xix. 7. cxix. 130. Prov. viii. 5. i. 4. Pſ. cxix. 9. Iſa. xxxv. 8. Ὁδὸς καθαρά. LXX.

They are in very legible characters graven by the finger of God upon our hearts and conſciences, ſo that by any conſiderate reflection inwards we may eaſily read them: or they are extant in God's word, there written as with a ſun-beam, ſo perſpicuouſly expreſſed, ſo frequently inculcated, that without groſs negligence or ſtrange dulneſs we cannot but deſcry them. For who with half an eye may not ſee, that the practice of pious love and reverence toward God, of entire juſtice and charity toward our neighbour, of ſober temperance and purity toward ourſelves, is approved by reaſon, is preſcribed by God to us? Rom. ii. 15. Iſa. xxx. 21. Pſ. xxxvii. 31.

Hence in the holy Scriptures, as bad ways are called dark, crooked, rough, ſlippery ways; ſo the good ways Prov. iv. 19. ii. 13. 15. Jo. viii. 12.

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are ſaid to be [a] clear, plain, direct, even ways: [b] *The path of the juſt*, ſay they, *is as a ſhining light. All the words of my mouth are plain to him that underſtandeth*, (or, *that conſidereth* them.) *My foot ſtandeth in an even place. The law of his God is in his heart: and none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide.*

Pſal. lxxxii. 5. cxxv. 5. xxxv. 6. lxxiii. 18. Jer. xxiii. 12.

Hence it is affirmed, that an upright man doth hardly need any conduct beſide his own honeſty. For, [c] *The integrity*, ſaith Solomon, *of the upright ſhall guide them*; and, *The righteouſneſs of the perfect ſhall direct his way.*

[a] Heb. xii. 13. Pſal. v. 8. Luke iii. 5. Prov. iii. 23. Deut. v. 32. xxviii. 14.

But in caſe ſuch an one ſhould ever be at a ſtand or at a loſs, in doubt of his courſe, he hath always at hand a moſt ſure guide to conduct or direct him. It is but aſking the way of him, or ſaying, with the Pſalmiſt, [d] *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths; Teach me to do thy will*, and, *Lead me in the way everlaſting; O let me not wander from thy commandments:* and then [e] *his ears*, as the Prophet ſaith, *ſhall hear a word behind him, ſaying, This is the way, walk ye in it*; then the words of the Pſalmiſt ſhall be verified, *What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him ſhall he teach in the way that he ſhall chooſe. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way.*

[b] Prov. iv. 18. viii. 8, 9. xiv. 6. Πάντα ἰνώπια τοῦ εὐθύοντος, LXX. Pſal. xxvi. 12. xxxvii. 31. xxvi. 1. xvii. 5. xviii. 36. [c] Prov. xi. 3, 5. [d] Pſ. xxv. 4. xvi. 11. xvii. 5. cxliii. 10. cxxxix. 24. cxix. 10. 27. 33. 35. &c. [e] If. xxx. 21. Pſ. xxv. 9. 12. xxxvii. 23.

Hence is the upright man happily ſecured from tiring pains in the ſearch, from racking anxieties in the choice, from grating ſcruples and galling regrets in the purſuit of his way.

(Prov. xii. 5.)

II. The upright walker doth tread upon firm ground. He doth build his practice, not upon the perilous bogs, the treacherous quagmires, the devouring quickſands of uncouth, bold, impious paradoxes, (ſuch as have been vented by Epicurus, by Machiavel, by others more lately, whoſe infamous names are too well known, as the effects of their peſtilent notions are too much felt;) but upon ſolid, ſafe, approved, and well-tried principles; *viz.* theſe, and the like coherent with them: That there is an eternal God, incomprehenſibly powerful, wiſe, juſt, and good; who is always preſent with us, and ever intent upon us; viewing not only all our external actions, (open and ſe-

cret,) but our inmoſt cogitations, deſires, and intentions, by the which our actions chiefly are to be eſtimated: that he, as governor of the world, and judge of men, doth concern himſelf in all human affairs, diſpoſing and managing all events according to his righteous pleaſure; exacting punctual obedience to his laws, and diſpenſing recompenſes anſwerable thereto; with impartial juſtice rewarding each man according to the purpoſes of his heart and the practices of his life: that all our good and happineſs doth abſolutely depend on God's favour; ſo that to pleaſe him can only be true wiſdom, and to offend him the greateſt folly: that virtue is incomparably the beſt endowment whereof we are capable, and ſin the worſt miſchief to which we are liable: that no worldly good or evil is conſiderable in compariſon with goods or evils ſpiritual: that nothing can be really profitable or advantageous to us, which doth not conſiſt with our duty to God, doth not ſomewiſe conduce to our ſpiritual intereſt and eternal welfare: yea, that every thing not ſerviceable to thoſe purpoſes is either a frivolous trifle, or a dangerous ſnare, or a notable damage, or a woful bane to us: that content of mind, ſpringing from innocence of life, from the faithful diſcharge of our duty, from ſatisfaction of conſcience, from a good hope in regard to God and our future ſtate, is in our eſteem and choice much to be preferred before all the delights which any temporal poſſeſſion or fruition can afford; and, that a bad mind is the ſoreſt adverſity which can befall us. Such are the grounds of upright practice, more firm than any rock, more unſhakeable than the foundations of heaven and earth; the which are aſſured by the ſacred Oracles, and atteſted by many remarkable providences; have ever been avowed by the wiſer ſort, and admitted by the general conſent of men, as for their truth, moſt agreeable to reaſon, and for their uſefulneſs, approved by conſtant experience; the belief of them having apparently moſt wholeſome influence upon all the concerns of life, both public and private; indeed, being abſolutely needful for upholding government, and preſerving human ſociety; no obligation, no faith or con-

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fidence between men, no friendſhip or peace being able to ſubſiſt without it. Whence the practice built on ſuch foundations muſt be very ſecure. And if God ſhall not ceaſe to be, if he will not let go the reins, if his word cannot deceive, if the wiſeſt men are not infatuated, if the common ſenſe of mankind do not prove extravagant, if the main props of life and pillars of ſociety do not fail; he that walketh uprightly, doth proceed on ſure grounds.

III. The upright perſon doth walk ſteadily, maintaining his principal reſolutions, and holding his main courſe, through all occaſions, without flinching or wavering, or deſultory inconſiſtence and fickleneſs; his integrity being an excellent ballaſt, holding him tight and well poiſed in his deportment; ſo that waves of temptation daſhing on him do not make him roll in uncertainty, or topple over into unworthy practices.

Luſt, paſſion, humour, intereſt, are things very mutable, as depending upon temper of body, caſualties of time, the winds and tides of this vertiginous world: whence he
Jam. i. 8. that is guided or moved by them muſt needs be *many*
Pſ. cvii. 27. *minded* and *unſtable in all his ways*; will *reel to and fro like a drunken man, and be at his wit's end*; never enjoying any ſettled reſt of mind, or obſerving a ſmooth tenor of action. But a good conſcience is very ſtable, and perſiſteth unvaried through all circumſtances of time, in all viciſſitudes of fortune. For it ſteereth by immoveable pole-ſtars, the inviolable rules of duty; it aimeth at marks which no force can ſtir out of their place; its objects of mind and affection are not tranſitory; its hopes and confidences are fixed on the *rock of ages*. Whence an upright
Τετράγωνος. perſon in all caſes, and all conditions, (proſperous or ad-
Juſtum et tenacem propoſiti virum, &c. *Hor.* verſe,) is the ſame man, and goeth the ſame way. Contingences of affairs do not unhinge his mind from its good purpoſes, or divert his foot from the right courſe. Let the weather be fair or foul, let the world ſmile or frown, let him get or loſe by it, let him be favoured or croſſed,
2 Cor. vi. 8. commended or reproached, (*by honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report,*) he will do what his duty requireth: the external ſtate of things muſt not alter the

moral reaſon of things with him. This is that which the Pſalmiſt obſerveth of him; *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings, for his heart ſtandeth faſt, and believeth in the Lord. His heart is ſtabliſhed, and will not ſhrink.* And this the Wiſe Man promiſeth to him; *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* SERM. V. Pſal. cxii. 7. 8. Prov. iii. 25. Prov. xvi. 3.

Hence a man is ſecured from diffidence in himſelf, and diſtraction in his mind, from frequently being off the hooks, from leading an unequal life, claſhing with itſelf, from deluding and diſappointing thoſe with whom he converſeth or dealeth, and conſequently from the inconveniences iſſuing thence.

IV. The way of uprightneſs is the ſureſt for diſpatch, and the ſhorteſt cut toward the execution or attainment of any good purpoſe; ſecuring a man from irkſome expectations and tedious delays, the which, as the Wiſe Man ſaith, *do make the heart ſick.* Prov. xiii. 12.

It in Scripture is called *the ſtraight and the plain way.* And as in geometry, of all lines or ſurfaces contained within the ſame bounds, the ſtraight line and the plain ſurface are the ſhorteſt; ſo it is alſo in morality: by the right line of juſtice, upon the plain ground of virtue, a man ſooneſt will arrive to any well-choſen end. Luke iii. 5.

In this way there are no bewildering intrigues and mazes, no crooked windings and turnings, no occaſions forcing men to dance hither and thither, to ſkip backward and forward, to do and undo; which courſes do protract buſineſs, and commonly do hinder from ever diſpatching it. But a man acting juſtly and fairly doth continually proceed on in the direct open road, without retreat, excurſion, or deflection; *not turning aſide* (as the phraſe is in holy writ) *to the right hand or to the left.* Prov. iv. 27. Deut. v. 32. xxviii. 14.

To clamber over fences of duty, to break through hedges of right, to treſpaſs upon hallowed encloſures, may ſeem the moſt ſhort and compendious ways of getting thither where one would be: but doth not a man venture breaking his neck, or ſcratching his face, incurring miſchief and trouble thereby? Is he not liable to the fate to which the Preacher doometh him, *He that dig-* Eccleſ. x. 8.

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geth a pit ſhall fall into it: and whoſo breaketh a hedge, a ſerpent ſhall bite him? For inſtance, to grow rich, fraud, extortion, corruption, oppreſſion, overreaching and ſupplanting may ſeem the readieſt and moſt expedite ways; but in truth they are the fartheſt ways about, or rather no ways at all: for that which is got by thoſe means is not our own; nor is the poſſeſſion of it truly wealth, but uſurpation, or detention of ſpoil and rapine, which we ought to diſgorge. And however to the getting it there are often mighty difficulties occurring from men, there (Prov. xxiii. 10, 11.) are commonly inſuperable obſtacles interpoſed by God; who hath expreſsly condemned and curſed thoſe ways, declaring that, *wealth gotten by vanity* (or cozenage) *ſhall be diminiſhed*; that *he that oppreſſeth to increaſe his riches, ſhall ſurely come to want*; that *he, who* (thus) *haſteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and conſidereth not that poverty ſhall come upon him*; that *as the partridge ſitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; ſo he that getteth riches and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool.* Whereas the plain way of honeſt harmleſs induſtry, (joined with a pious regard to him who is the diſpenſer of all good things,) how ſlow ſoever it may ſeem, is the moſt ſpeedy, becauſe the only ſafe way to thrive; having, beſide all ſecondary advantages, the ſecurity of thoſe oracles; *The hand of the diligent ſhall make rich: He that gathereth by labour ſhall increaſe: By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.*

Prov. xiii. 11. xxii. 16. xxviii. 22. 20. xxi. 6. Jer. xvii. 11. Prov. x. 4. xxviii. 19. xiii. 11. xxii. 4. Pſ. cxii. 3.

V. The way of uprightneſs is in itſelf very ſafe, free of danger, tending to no miſchief; according to thoſe ſayings of the Wiſe Man; *There ſhall no evil happen to the juſt: In the way of righteouſneſs is life; and in the path thereof there is no death.*

Prov. xxviii. 18. xvi. 17. xiii. 6. x. 29. xii. 21. 28.

He who deſigneth only that which is juſt and reaſonable, who innocently and fairly proſecuteth his intent, can run no great hazard, cannot fall into any extreme diſaſter, cannot irrecoverably ſink into miſerable diſappointment.

Pſ. xxxvii. 24.

He probably will not receive much harm from men, or

trouble from the world: for, as he meaneth innocently, as he dealeth inoffenſively, (not violently aſſailing, nor fraudulently circumventing, not any wiſe injuriouſly or maliciouſly abuſing any man,) as he doth yield no juſt provocation or urgent temptation to oppoſe him; ſo he is not very likely to meet with obſtructions or croſſes thwarting his deſigns. He can hardly raiſe up adverſaries; at leaſt ſuch as will prove very formidable, or very fierce and implacable toward him. SERM. V.

He may be ſure that few wiſe men, and no good men, will trouble him; but that ſuch rather will afford their countenance and furtherance to his undertakings.

But aſſuredly he ſhall have the favourable protection of Almighty God, who throughly knowing his heart, and obſerving the righteouſneſs of his intentions and proceedings, will not ſuffer him to incur any notable, deſtructive, remedileſs calamity. His prayer, dictated by good conſcience, *Let integrity and uprightneſs preſerve me*, will certainly be heard; God having paſſed his word for it in numberleſs places of Scripture; particularly in thoſe remarkable words of Iſaiah: [a] *He that walketh righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly; he that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil; he ſhall dwell on high: his place of defence ſhall be the munitions of rocks: his bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure.* That is, a man who is conſtantly upright in his dealings, ſhall by the divine Providence be infallibly and impregnably preſerved from any grievous miſchief, from any ſore want, from any extreme diſtreſs. Pſal. xxv. 21. (Prov. xiii. 6. xi. 6.) Prov. ii. 7. xviii. 10. xxviii. 18. xxix. 25. Pſal. xviii. 2. 30. 35. xxiii. 4. xxiv. 4, 5. Job xi. 14, 15. [a] Iſa. xxxiii. 15, 16.

The way of uprightneſs is ever guarded with angels, ready to promote the affairs of the honeſt perſon, or at leaſt to protect him from evil. He may hopefully ſay to himſelf, as Abraham did to his ſervant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will ſend his angel with thee, and proſper thy way*: or he confidently may apply to himſelf that of the Pſalmiſt, *He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to* Gen. xxiv. 40. Pſal. xci. 11, 12.

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geth a pit ſhall fall into it: and whoſo breaketh a hedge, a ſerpent ſhall bite him? For inſtance, to grow rich, fraud, extortion, corruption, oppreſſion, overreaching and ſupplanting may ſeem the readieſt and moſt expedite ways; but in truth they are the fartheſt ways about, or rather no ways at all: for that which is got by thoſe means is not our own; nor is the poſſeſſion of it truly wealth, but uſurpation, or detention of ſpoil and rapine, which we ought to diſgorge. And however to the getting it there are often mighty difficulties occurring from men, there (Prov. xxiii. 10, 11.) are commonly inſuperable obſtacles interpoſed by God; who hath expreſsly condemned and curſed thoſe ways, Prov. xiii. 11. xxii. 16. xxviii. 22. declaring that, *wealth gotten by vanity* (or cozenage) *ſhall be diminiſhed*; that *he that oppreſſeth to increaſe his riches,* 20. xxi. 6. *ſhall ſurely come to want*; that *he, who* (thus) *haſteth to be* Jer. xvii. 11. *rich, hath an evil eye, and conſidereth not that poverty ſhall come upon him*; that *as the partridge ſitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; ſo he that getteth riches and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool.* Whereas the plain way of honeſt harmleſs induſtry, (joined with a pious regard to him who is the diſpenſer of all good things,) how ſlow ſoever it may ſeem, is the moſt ſpeedy, becauſe the only ſafe way to thrive; having, beſide all ſecondary advantages, Prov. x. 4. xxviii. 19. xiii. 11. xxii. 4. Pſ. cxii. 3. the ſecurity of thoſe oracles; *The hand of the diligent ſhall make rich: He that gathereth by labour ſhall increaſe: By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.*

V. The way of uprightneſs is in itſelf very ſafe, free of danger, tending to no miſchief; according to thoſe ſayings Prov. xxviii. 18. xvi. 17. xiii. 6. x. 29. xii. 21. 28. of the Wiſe Man; *There ſhall no evil happen to the juſt: In the way of righteouſneſs is life; and in the path thereof there is no death.*

He who deſigneth only that which is juſt and reaſonable, who innocently and fairly proſecuteth his intent, can run no great hazard, cannot fall into any extreme Pſ. xxxvii. 24. diſaſter, cannot irrecoverably ſink into miſerable diſappointment.

He probably will not receive much harm from men, or

trouble from the world: for, as he meaneth innocently, SERM. V.
as he dealeth inoffenſively, (not violently aſſailing, nor fraudulently circumventing, not any wiſe injuriouſly or maliciouſly abuſing any man,) as he doth yield no juſt provocation or urgent temptation to oppoſe him; ſo he is not very likely to meet with obſtructions or croſſes thwarting his deſigns. He can hardly raiſe up adverſaries; at leaſt ſuch as will prove very formidable, or very fierce and implacable toward him.

He may be ſure that few wiſe men, and no good men, will trouble him; but that ſuch rather will afford their countenance and furtherance to his undertakings.

But aſſuredly he ſhall have the favourable protection of Almighty God, who throughly knowing his heart, and obſerving the righteouſneſs of his intentions and proceedings, will not ſuffer him to incur any notable, deſtructive, remedileſs calamity. His prayer, dictated by good conſcience, *Let integrity and uprightneſs preſerve me*, will certainly be heard; God having paſſed his word for it in numberleſs places of Scripture; particularly in thoſe remarkable words of Iſaiah: [a] *He that walketh righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly; he that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil; he ſhall dwell on high: his place of defence ſhall be the munitions of rocks: his bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure.* That is, a man who is conſtantly upright in his dealings, ſhall by the divine Providence be infallibly and impregnably preſerved from any grievous miſchief, from any ſore want, from any extreme diſtreſs.

Pſal. xxv. 21. (Prov. xiii. 6. xi. 6.) Prov. ii. 7. xviii. 10. xxviii. 18. xxix. 25. Pſal. xviii. 2. 30. 35. xxiii. 4. xxiv. 4, 5. Job xi. 14, 15. [a] Iſa. xxxiii. 15, 16.

The way of uprightneſs is ever guarded with angels, ready to promote the affairs of the honeſt perſon, or at leaſt to protect him from evil. He may hopefully ſay to himſelf, as Abraham did to his ſervant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will ſend his angel with thee, and proſper thy way*: or he confidently may apply to himſelf that of the Pſalmiſt, *He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to*

Gen. xxiv. 40. Pſal. xci. 11, 12.

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keep thee in all thy ways. They ſhall bear thee up in their hands, leſt thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.

However, the ſequel will be tolerable: whatever the ſucceſs of his undertaking be, it can be no ruin, no ſlur, no heart-breaking to him. His conſcience is ſafe, his credit is entire, his hopes are good; he is perfectly ſecure from being tainted with foul guilt, from being expoſed to due reproach, from being ſtung with vexatious remorſe, from being plunged into a gulf of deſperation or diſconſolateneſs. For,

VI. The way of uprightneſs is fair and pleaſant. He that walketh in it hath good weather, and a clear ſky about him; a hopeful confidence and a cheerful ſatisfaction do ever wait upon him. *It is joy*, as the Wiſe Man ſaith, *to the juſt to do judgment.*

Prov. xxi. 15.

(Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.)

Being conſcious to himſelf of an honeſt meaning, and a due courſe of proſecuting it, he feeleth no check or ſtruggling of mind, no regret or ſting of heart; being throughly ſatisfied and pleaſed with what he is about, his judgment approving, and his will acquieſcing in his procedure, as worthy of himſelf, agreeable to reaſon, and conformable to his duty.

He therefore briſkly moveth forward with alacrity and courage; there being within him nothing to control or countermand him, to pull him back, to make him halt, to diſtract or diſturb him.

Nor hardly can any thing abroad diſmay or diſcourage him. For he may reaſonably hope for the good will of men, and cannot hugely dread their oppoſition. He may ſtrongly preſume upon the propitious aſpect and favourable ſuccour of Heaven, which always ſmileth and caſteth benign influences on honeſt undertakings.

Prov. xi. 20.

Jer. xxxii. 19. Prov. xxiv. 14. Heb. iv. 16. Pſ. xxxvii. 5. lv. 22. Prov. xvi. 3. Eccluſ. ii. 10.

He that hath choſen a good way, may with aſſurance commend his way to God's providence; he may depend upon God for his concurrent benediction; he with an humble boldneſs may addreſs prayers to God for his protection and aid. He ſo doing hath intereſt in divers clear declarations and expreſs promiſes of good ſucceſs; ſuch as thoſe; *Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him,*

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and he ſhall bring it to paſs. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will ſave them. Pſal. xxxiv. 22. xxvi. 1. xxxiii. 21. Prov. x. 24. Pſ. cxlv. 18, 19. xxxiv. 15. xxvi. 11. Job xxii. 27.

He may dare to refer his caſe to the ſevereſt examination, ſaying with Job, [a] *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity;* and with the Pſalmiſt, [b] *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteouſneſs, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*

He with an humble confidence can appeal to God, borrowing the words of Hezekiah, [c] *I beſeech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight.*

[a] Job xxxi. 6. [b] Pſal. vii. 8. xxvi. 1. [c] 2 Kings xx. 3.

Hence, *The hope of the righteous,* as the Wiſe Man telleth us, *is gladneſs.* He, conſidering the goodneſs, the juſtice, the fidelity of God, whereof his integrity doth render him capable and a proper object, cannot but conceive a comfortable hope of a good iſſue. Prov. x. 28.

And obtaining ſucceſs, he doth not only enjoy the material pleaſure thereof, but the formal ſatisfaction that it is indeed good ſucceſs, or a bleſſing indulged to him by ſpecial favour of God; enabling him to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteouſneſs; according to the cleanneſs of my hands hath he recompenſed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.* Pſal. xviii. 20, 21.

However, an upright dealer hath this comfortable reſerve, that whatever doth befall him, however the buſineſs goeth, he ſhall not condemn and puniſh himſelf with remorſe; he ſhall not want a conſolation able to ſupport and to erect his mind. He ſhall triumph, if not in the felicity of his ſucceſs, yet in the integrity of his heart, and the innocence of his deportment; even as bleſſed Job did under all the preſſures of his adverſity: for, *Till I die,* ſaid he, *I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go: my heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.*

So true it is upon all accounts, that, according to that

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aſſertion in the Pſalm, *Light is ſown for the righteous, and joyful gladneſs for the upright in heart.*

Pſal. xcvii. 11.

VII. He that walketh uprightly is ſecure as to his honour and credit. He is ſure not to come off diſgracefully, either at home in his own apprehenſions, or abroad in the eſtimations of men. He doth not bluſh at what he is doing, nor doth reproach himſelf for what he hath done. No blemiſh or blame can ſtick upon his proceeding.

By pure integrity a man firſt maintaineth a due reſpect and eſteem for himſelf, then preſerveth an entire reputation with others: he reflecteth on his own heart with complacence, and looketh upon the world with confidence. He hath no fear of being detected, or care to ſmother his intents. He is content that his thoughts ſhould be ſounded, and his actions ſifted to the bottom. He could even wiſh that his breaſt had windows, that his heart were tranſparent, that all the world might ſee through him, and deſcry the clearneſs of his intentions. The more curiouſly his ways are marked, the more exactly his dealings are ſcanned, the more throughly his deſigns are penetrated and known; the greater approbation he is ſure to receive.

The iſſue of things aſſuredly will be creditable to him; and when the day-light hath ſcattered all miſts, hath cleared all miſpriſions and miſtakes, his reputation will ſhine moſt brightly: the event declaring, that he had no corrupt ends; the courſe of his proceedings being juſtified by the very light of things.

God himſelf will be concerned to vindicate his reputation, not ſuffering him to be conſiderably defamed; according to that promiſe, *He ſhall bring forth thy righteouſneſs as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.* That in Job will be made good to him, *Then ſhalt thou lift up thy face without ſpot:* and he may confidently aver with the Pſalmiſt, *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect to all thy commandments.*

Pſ. xxxvii. 6. 19. xxxiv. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 6. Job. xi. 15. Pſ. cxix. 6. 89. 46.

If he findeth good ſucceſs, it will not be invidious, appearing well deſerved, and fairly procured: it will be

truly honourable, as a fruit and recompence of virtue, as a mark and pledge of the divine favour toward him. SERM. V.

If he ſeemeth diſappointed, yet he will not be diſparaged: wiſe and candid men will excuſe him; good men will patronize his cauſe; no man of ſenſe and ingenuity will inſult on his misfortune. *He ſhall not,* as the Pſalmiſt aſſureth, *be aſhamed in an evil time.* Yea, often his repute from under a cloud will ſhine, if not with ſo glaring ſplendor, yet with a pleaſant luſtre; uprightneſs diſpoſing him to bear adverſe events with a graceful decency. Pſ. xci. 15. Pſ. xxxvii. 19.

VIII. The particular methods of acting which uprightneſs diſpoſeth to obſerve, do yield great ſecurity from troubles and croſſes in their tranſactions.

What is the conduct of the upright man? He is clear, frank, candid, harmleſs, conſiſtent in all his behaviour, his diſcourſe, his dealing. His heart commonly may be ſeen in his face, his mind doth ever ſuit with his ſpeech, his deeds have a juſt correſpondence with his profeſſions; he never faileth to perform what he doth promiſe, and to ſatisfy the expectations which he hath raiſed. Prov. xiii. 5. Pſal. xxxvi. 3, 4. xxxiv. 13. xv. 2.

He doth not wrap himſelf in clouds, that none may ſee where he is, or know how to find him; may diſcern what he is about, or whither he tendeth.

He diſguiſeth not his intents with fallacious pretences of conſcience, of public good, of ſpecial friendſhip and reſpect. Prov. x. 18.

He doth uſe no diſingenuous, ſpiteful, unjuſt tricks or ſleights, to ſerve the preſent turn.

He layeth no baits or ſnares *to catch men,* alluring them into miſchief or inconvenience. Jer. v. 26. (Pſ. lxiv. 5. lvi. 6. ix. 15. vii. 15. x. 2. lvii. 6. xxxv. 7. cxl. 5. Prov. xxvi. 27. Eccleſ. x. 8.)

As he doth not affect any poor baſe ends, ſo he will not defile his fair intentions by ſordid means of compaſſing them; ſuch as are illuſive ſimulations and ſubdolous artifices, treacherous colluſions, ſly inſinuations and ſycophantic detractions, verſatile whifflings and dodgings, flattering colloguings and glozings, ſervile crouchings and fawnings, and the like. Pſal. x. 7. lv. 21. lxiv. 6. x. 9, 10.

He hath little of the ſerpent, (none of its lurking in- lvi. 5.

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fidiouſneſs, of its ſurpriſing violence, of its rancorous venom, of its keen mordacity,) but much of the dove, (all its ſimplicity, its gentleneſs, its fidelity, its innocence,) in his converſation and commerce.

Rom. xvi. 18. Ecclus. xix 26.

His wiſdom is ever tempered with ſincerity, and ſeaſoned with humanity, with meekneſs, with charity; being *the wiſdom which is from above, firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy.*

2 Sam. xv. 5. Prov. xi. 9. xxvi. 25. Jam. iii. 17.

He ſometime may prudently reſerve his mind, not venting it by fooliſh loquacity: but his words do never claſh with his meaning, ſo as to deceive or diſappoint any man.

Prov. xiv. 33. xxix. 11. xiii. 3. 16. xxi. 23. xii. 23. Ecclus. xx. 7.

He may warily prevent harm and decline perils: but it is without hurtful countermining, or deriving miſchief on his neighbour.

Prov. xxii. 3. xxvii. 12. xiv. 8. 15, 16.

He may diſcreetly pick out ſeaſons, and embrace opportunities of righting or benefitting himſelf: but he never will ſeek or lay hold of advantages to prejudice others.

Eccleſ. viii. 5.

He ſometimes may repreſs inſurrections of anger or diſguſt: but he never doth allow them to bake into rancour or malice.

Prov. xii. 16. xix. 11.

He may be apt to uſe courteous, affable, obliging demeanour, ſerving to breed friendſhips, and to ſtifle enmities: but he never thereby meaneth to gull, inveigle, and entrap men; or to procure inſtruments and aids of any perverſe deſign.

He is no enemy to himſelf, but (according to the obligations of reaſon and conſcience) he hath always a regard to the good of others; nor is ever ſo ſelfiſh, as to be unjuſt or uncharitable to any man.

The principal engines he doth employ for achieving his enterpriſes are, a careful and cautious providence in contriving, a ſedulous and ſteady diligence in acting, a circumſpect heedfulneſs not to provoke any man by offenſive carriage, by injury, by diſcourteſy, to obſtruct him, but rather by kind demonſtrations and real beneficence to engage men to further him in his proceedings:

but eſpecially his main inſtrument, wherein he moſt confideth, is devout ſupplication to God for his ſuccour and bleſſing. SERM. V.

Now is not this conduct the moſt ſecure that can be? doth it not afford many great commodities and advantages? doth it not exempt from manifold fears, and cares, and croſſes, and ſlaveries?

It cannot but derive bleſſings from the God of truth, the great friend of ſimplicity and ſincerity, the hater of falſehood and guile. Prov. xii. 19. 22.

And humanly regarding things, he that uſeth theſe methods, doth from them obtain many conveniences. He doth not lie under perpetual conſtraint, engaged to keep a conſtant guard upon himſelf, to watch his memory, to curb his tongue, to manage his very looks and geſtures, leſt they betray his intentions, and diſcloſe his plots. He is not at the trouble of ſtopping holes, of mending flaws, of patching up repugnances in his actions, that his mind do not break through them. He is not afraid of the diſappointment and ſhame which attend the detection of unworthy deſigns. He is not at pains to obviate the jealouſies, the ſurmiſes, the diffidences, the counterplots, the preventive oppoſitions and aſſaults, which gloomy cloſeneſs and crafty diſſimulation ever do raiſe againſt the practiſers of them. In fine, men do not ſhun the converſation and the commerce of an upright perſon, but gladly do conſort and deal with him; do ſeek his acquaintance and alliance: they are not apt to diſtruſt him, to ſuſpect him, to be ſhy and reſerved in their intercourſe with him; but readily do place an entire confidence in him, and uſe a clear frankneſs toward him. No man doth fear him as dangerous, or will croſs him as an adverſary. Whence as he ſeldom hath cauſe to fear, or occaſion to conteſt with others; ſo he doth undiſturbedly enjoy the benefits of ſociety with great ſafety, eaſe, and comfort. Prov. xxvi. 25. x. 18. xxi. 6. Pſal. xxvi. 4.

IX. Laſtly, an upright walker hath perfect ſecurity, as to the final reſult of affairs, that he ſhall not be quite baffled in his expectations and deſires. And if proſperity doth con-

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ſiſt in a ſatisfaction of mind concerning events, he cannot fail of moſt proſperous ſucceſs. *Whatſoever he doeth,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt of him, *it ſhall proſper.* How is that? Doth he, if he warreth, always get the victory? is he perpetually, when he tradeth, a conſiderable gainer? will he certainly, after ſowing, reap a plentiful crop? Probably yes; and perhaps no. Yet aſſuredly he ſhall proſper, in the true notion of proſperity, explained by theſe divine ſayings: *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever. Surely I know it ſhall be well with them that fear God.*

Pſal. i. 3. Prov. xii. 21. Pſ. xxxvii. 37. Iſa. xxxii. 17. Eccleſ. viii. 12.

He cannot be much defeated in his purpoſes: for, as to his general, principal, abſolute deſigns, (that is, his deſign of pleaſing God, and procuring his favour; his deſign of ſatisfying himſelf, and diſcharging his conſcience; his deſign of promoting his own ſpiritual intereſt, and ſaving his ſoul; his deſign of doing good, of exerciſing charity to his neighbour, of ſerving the public, of obliging the world by virtuous example, and by real beneficence;) theſe he cannot fail throughly to accompliſh; nothing can obſtruct him in the proſecution, nothing can debar him from the execution of theſe undertakings; in ſpite of all the world, by the ſuccour of that divine grace which ever doth favour and further ſuch deſigns, he moſt happily will achieve them. And for other inferior deſigns, he can hardly be croſſed in regard to them: for it is an eſſential part of integrity, not otherwiſe to affect or aim at private ſecular intereſts, than under condition, and with a reſervation, if it be God's pleaſure, if it ſeem good to divine wiſdom. He knoweth that his pains employed on any honeſt purpoſe, in a fair way, (be it to procure ſome worldly advantage for himſelf, for his relations, or for his friend,) are not loſt, if they have the fruit of ſubmiſſion to God's will, and acquieſcence in the event diſpoſed by him. He is aſſured that it is good luck to have his project blaſted, and that miſſing is better than getting, when by ſovereign wiſdom it is ſo determined. He there-

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ſure could not ſo fix his heart, or engage his affection in any ſuch concern, that his mind is ſurpriſed, or his paſſions diſcompoſed by a ſeeming adverſeneſs of events to his endeavours. So that in effect he can have no bad ſucceſs. For how can that occurrence be deemed bad, which plain reaſon dicteteth in certain judgment to be moſt expedient for him; about which he ever was very indifferent, and with which at preſent he is not heartily diſpleaſed? How can it be taken for diſappointment and misfortune, which one was prepared to embrace with ſatisfaction and complacence?

Yea, to a perſon ſo diſpoſed, that ſucceſs which ſeemeth moſt adverſe, juſtly may be reputed the beſt and moſt happy, as promoting ends incomparably more excellent than any worldly gain; as producing fruits exceedingly more wholeſome and more ſavoury than any temporal commodity; as exerciſing and improving the divineſt virtues, (humility, patience, meekneſs, moderation, contentedneſs,) a grain whereof is worth all the wealth, all the preferment, all that is deſirable in the world.

Wherefore let the worſt that can arrive, (or that which human blindneſs and fondneſs do count the worſt,) yet upright perſons do not come off ill, or ſo (matters being rightly ſtated) as to be loſers upon the foot of the account.

If this do not ſatisfy groſſer apprehenſions, we may add, that even in theſe meaner concerns Almighty God is pleaſed commonly to reward and encourage upright perſons by the beſt ſucceſs. For he hath as it were a natural inclination to gratify thoſe who deſire to pleaſe him; and, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth it, *hath pleaſure in the proſperity of his ſervants.* He may ſeem concerned in honour to countenance thoſe who have regard to his will, and who repoſe confidence in his aid; diſcriminating them from ſuch as preſume to act againſt or without him, in defiance to his will, with no deference to his providence. As they do render him his due reſpect, by ſubmitting to his authority, and avowing his power; ſo he will acknowledge them by ſignally favouring their concerns. Even his

Pſal. xxxv. 27. Prov. xi. 20. xv. 9. Prov. xiv. 2.

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truth and fidelity are engaged in their behalf; ſeeing he very often hath declared and promiſed, that in all matters, and upon all occaſions, he will be ready to bleſs them.

Deut. xxviii. 2. xxx. 9. Pſ. cxxviii. 1, 2. xci. 1. xxxiv. 9, 10. lxxxiv. 11. Matt. vi. 33. Eccleſ. viii. 5. Prov. xxviii. 10. xx. 6. (Prov. xi. 18.)

X. To conclude; It is an infinite advantage of upright dealing, that at the laſt iſſue, when all things ſhall be moſt accurately tried and impartially decided, a man is aſſured to be fully juſtified in it, and plentifully rewarded for it. As then all the deceits, which now paſs under ſpecious maſks, ſhall be laid bare; all varniſh of pretence ſhall be wiped off; all perverſe intrigues ſhall be unravelled; all wicked and baſe intentions ſhall be quite ſtripped of the veils which now enfold them; all ſhrewd contrivers and engineers of miſchief, all practiſers of unjuſt and malicious guile, ſhall be expoſed to ſhame, *ſhall lie down in ſorrow:* ſo then *the righteous man ſhall ſtand in great boldneſs;* his caſe will be rightly ſtated, and fully cleared from ſlanderous aſperſions, from odious ſurmiſes, from unlucky prejudices and miſtakes: what he hath done ſhall be approved; what he hath ſuffered ſhall be repaired. So that it then evidently will appear, that upright ſimplicity is the deepeſt wiſdom, and perverſe craft the meereſt ſhallowneſs; that he who is true and juſt to others, is moſt faithful and friendly to himſelf; that whoever doth abuſe his neighbour, is his own greateſt cheater and foe.

Rom. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iii. 13. iv. 5. For, *In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt. The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts; and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.* Unto which our upright Judge, *the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

1 Tim. i. 17.

trouble from the world: for, as he meaneth innocently, as he dealeth inoffenſively, (not violently aſſailing, nor fraudulently circumventing, not any wiſe injuriouſly or maliciouſly abuſing any man,) as he doth yield no juſt provocation or urgent temptation to oppoſe him; ſo he is not very likely to meet with obſtructions or croſſes thwarting his deſigns. He can hardly raiſe up adverſaries; at leaſt ſuch as will prove very formidable, or very fierce and implacable toward him. SERM. V.

He may be ſure that few wiſe men, and no good men, will trouble him; but that ſuch rather will afford their countenance and furtherance to his undertakings.

But aſſuredly he ſhall have the favourable protection of Almighty God, who throughly knowing his heart, and obſerving the righteouſneſs of his intentions and proceedings, will not ſuffer him to incur any notable, deſtructive, remedileſs calamity. His prayer, dictated by good conſcience, *Let integrity and uprightneſs preſerve me*, will certainly be heard; God having paſſed his word for it in numberleſs places of Scripture; particularly in thoſe remarkable words of Iſaiah: [a] *He that walketh righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly; he that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil; he ſhall dwell on high: his place of defence ſhall be the munitions of rocks: his bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure.* That is, a man who is conſtantly upright in his dealings, ſhall by the divine Providence be infallibly and impregnably preſerved from any grievous miſchief, from any ſore want, from any extreme diſtreſs. Pſal. xxv. 21. (Prov. xiii. 6. xi. 6.) Prov. ii. 7. xviii. 10. xxviii. 18. xxix. 25. Pſal. xviii. 2. 30. 35. xxiii. 4. xxiv. 4, 5. Job xi. 14, 15. [a] Iſa. xxxiii. 15, 16.

The way of uprightneſs is ever guarded with angels, ready to promote the affairs of the honeſt perſon, or at leaſt to protect him from evil. He may hopefully ſay to himſelf, as Abraham did to his ſervant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will ſend his angel with thee, and proſper thy way:* or he confidently may apply to himſelf that of the Pſalmiſt, *He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to* Gen. xxiv. 40. Pſal. xci. 11, 12.

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keep thee in all thy ways. They ſhall bear thee up in their hands, leſt thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.

However, the ſequel will be tolerable: whatever the ſucceſs of his undertaking be, it can be no ruin, no ſlur, no heart-breaking to him. His conſcience is ſafe, his credit is entire, his hopes are good; he is perfectly ſecure from being tainted with foul guilt, from being expoſed to due reproach, from being ſtung with vexatious remorſe, from being plunged into a gulf of deſperation or diſconſolateneſs. For,

VI. The way of uprightneſs is fair and pleaſant. He that walketh in it hath good weather, and a clear ſky about him; a hopeful confidence and a cheerful ſatisfaction do ever wait upon him. *It is joy*, as the Wiſe Man ſaith, *to the juſt to do judgment.*

Prov. xxi. 15.

(Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.)

Being conſcious to himſelf of an honeſt meaning, and a due courſe of proſecuting it, he feeleth no check or ſtruggling of mind, no regret or ſting of heart; being throughly ſatisfied and pleaſed with what he is about, his judgment approving, and his will acquieſcing in his procedure, as worthy of himſelf, agreeable to reaſon, and conformable to his duty.

He therefore briſkly moveth forward with alacrity and courage; there being within him nothing to control or countermand him, to pull him back, to make him halt, to diſtract or diſturb him.

Nor hardly can any thing abroad diſmay or diſcourage him. For he may reaſonably hope for the good will of men, and cannot hugely dread their oppoſition. He may ſtrongly preſume upon the propitious aſpect and favourable ſuccour of Heaven, which always ſmileth and caſteth benign influences on honeſt undertakings.

Prov. xi. 20.

Jer. xxxii. 19. Prov. xxiv. 14. Heb. iv. 16. Pſ. xxxvii. 5. Iv. 22. Prov. xvi. 3. Eccluſ. ii. 10.

He that hath choſen a good way, may with aſſurance commend his way to God's providence; he may depend upon God for his concurrent benediction; he with an humble boldneſs may addreſs prayers to God for his protection and aid. He ſo doing hath intereſt in divers clear declarations and expreſs promiſes of good ſucceſs; ſuch as thoſe; *Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him,*

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and he ſhall bring it to paſs. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will ſave them. Pſal. xxxiv. 22. xxvi. 1. xxxiii. 21. Prov. x. 24. Pſ. cxlv. 18, 19. xxxiv. 15. xxvi. 11. Job xxii. 27.

He may dare to refer his caſe to the ſevereſt examination, ſaying with Job, [a] *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity;* and with the Pſalmiſt, [b] *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteouſneſs, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*

He with an humble confidence can appeal to God, borrowing the words of Hezekiah, [c] *I beſeech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight.*

[a] Job xxxi. 6. [b] Pſal. vii. 8. xxvi. 1. [c] 2 Kings xx. 3.

Hence, *The hope of the righteous,* as the Wiſe Man telleth us, *is gladneſs.* He, conſidering the goodneſs, the juſtice, the fidelity of God, whereof his integrity doth render him capable and a proper object, cannot but conceive a comfortable hope of a good iſſue. Prov. x. 28.

And obtaining ſucceſs, he doth not only enjoy the material pleaſure thereof, but the formal ſatisfaction that it is indeed good ſucceſs, or a bleſſing indulged to him by ſpecial favour of God; enabling him to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteouſneſs; according to the cleanneſs of my hands hath he recompenſed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.* Pſal. xviii. 20, 21.

However, an upright dealer hath this comfortable reſerve, that whatever doth befall him, however the buſineſs goeth, he ſhall not condemn and puniſh himſelf with remorſe; he ſhall not want a conſolation able to ſupport and to erect his mind. He ſhall triumph, if not in the felicity of his ſucceſs, yet in the integrity of his heart, and the innocence of his deportment; even as bleſſed Job did under all the preſſures of his adverſity: for, *Till I die,* ſaid he, *I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go: my heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.*

So true it is upon all accounts, that, according to that

SERM. V. aſſertion in the Pſalm, *Light is ſown for the righteous, and joyful gladneſs for the upright in heart.*

Pſal. xcvii. 11. VII. He that walketh uprightly is ſecure as to his honour and credit. He is ſure not to come off diſgracefully, either at home in his own apprehenſions, or abroad in the eſtimations of men. He doth not bluſh at what he is doing, nor doth reproach himſelf for what he hath done. No blemiſh or blame can ſtick upon his proceeding.

By pure integrity a man firſt maintaineth a due reſpect and eſteem for himſelf, then preſerveth an entire reputation with others: he reflecteth on his own heart with complacence, and looketh upon the world with confidence. He hath no fear of being detected, or care to ſmother his intents. He is content that his thoughts ſhould be ſounded, and his actions ſifted to the bottom. He could even wiſh that his breaſt had windows, that his heart were tranſparent, that all the world might ſee through him, and deſcry the clearneſs of his intentions. The more curiouſly his ways are marked, the more exactly his dealings are ſcanned, the more throughly his deſigns are penetrated and known; the greater approbation he is ſure to receive.

The iſſue of things aſſuredly will be creditable to him; and when the day-light hath ſcattered all miſts, hath cleared all miſpriſions and miſtakes, his reputation will ſhine moſt brightly: the event declaring, that he had no corrupt ends; the courſe of his proceedings being juſtified by the very light of things.

God himſelf will be concerned to vindicate his reputation, not ſuffering him to be conſiderably defamed; according to that promiſe, *He ſhall bring forth thy righteouſneſs as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.* That in Job will be made good to him, *Then ſhalt thou lift up thy face without ſpot:* and he may confidently aver with the Pſalmiſt, *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect to all thy commandments.*

Pſ. xxxvii. 6. 19. xxxiv. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 6. Job. xi. 15. Pſ. cxix. 6. 89. 46.

If he findeth good ſucceſs, it will not be invidious, appearing well deſerved, and fairly procured: it will be

truly honourable, as a fruit and recompence of virtue, as a mark and pledge of the divine favour toward him. SERM. V.

If he ſeemeth diſappointed, yet he will not be diſparaged: wiſe and candid men will excuſe him; good men will patronize his cauſe; no man of ſenſe and ingenuity will inſult on his misfortune. *He ſhall not,* as the Pſalmiſt aſſureth, *be aſhamed in an evil time.* Yea, often his repute from under a cloud will ſhine, if not with ſo glaring ſplendor, yet with a pleaſant luſtre; uprightneſs diſpoſing him to bear adverſe events with a graceful decency. Pſ. xci. 15. Pſ. xxxvii. 19.

VIII. The particular methods of acting which uprightneſs diſpoſeth to obſerve, do yield great ſecurity from troubles and croſſes in their tranſactions.

What is the conduct of the upright man? He is clear, frank, candid, harmleſs, conſiſtent in all his behaviour, his diſcourſe, his dealing. His heart commonly may be ſeen in his face, his mind doth ever ſuit with his ſpeech, his deeds have a juſt correſpondence with his profeſſions; he never faileth to perform what he doth promiſe, and to ſatisfy the expectations which he hath raiſed. Prov. xiii. 5. Pſal. xxxvi. 3, 4. xxxiv. 13. xv. 2.

He doth not wrap himſelf in clouds, that none may ſee where he is, or know how to find him; may diſcern what he is about, or whither he tendeth.

He diſguiſeth not his intents with fallacious pretences of conſcience, of public good, of ſpecial friendſhip and reſpect. Prov. x. 18.

He doth uſe no diſingenuous, ſpiteful, unjuſt tricks or ſleights, to ſerve the preſent turn.

He layeth no baits or ſnares *to catch men,* alluring them into miſchief or inconvenience. Jer. v. 26. (Pſ. lxiv. 5. lvi. 6. ix.

As he doth not affect any poor baſe ends, ſo he will not defile his fair intentions by ſordid means of compaſſing them; ſuch as are illuſive ſimulations and ſubdolous artifices, treacherous colluſions, ſly inſinuations and ſycophantic detractions, verſatile whifflings and dodgings, flattering colloguings and glozings, ſervile crouchings and fawnings, and the like. 15. vii. 15. x. 2. lvii. 6. xxxv. 7. cxl. 5. Prov. xxvi. 27. Eccleſ. x. 8.) Pſal. x. 7. lv. 21. lxiv. 6. x. 9, 10.

He hath little of the ſerpent, (none of its lurking in- lvi. 5.

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fidiouſneſs, of its ſurpriſing violence, of its rancorous venom, of its keen mordacity,) but much of the dove, (all its ſimplicity, its gentleneſs, its fidelity, its innocence,) in his converſation and commerce.

Rom. xvi. 18. Ecclus. xix 26. 2 Sam. xv. 5. Prov. xi. 9. xxvi. 25. Jam. iii. 17.

His wiſdom is ever tempered with ſincerity, and ſeaſoned with humanity, with meekneſs, with charity; being *the wiſdom which is from above, firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy.*

Prov. xiv. 33. xxix. 11. xiii. 3. 16. xxi. 23. xii. 23. Ecclus. xx. 7. Prov. xxii. 8. xxvii. 12. xiv. 8. 15, 16. Eccleſ. viii. 5.

He ſometime may prudently reſerve his mind, not venting it by fooliſh loquacity: but his words do never claſh with his meaning, ſo as to deceive or diſappoint any man.

He may warily prevent harm and decline perils: but it is without hurtful countermining, or deriving miſchief on his neighbour.

He may diſcreetly pick out ſeaſons, and embrace opportunities of righting or benefitting himſelf: but he never will ſeek or lay hold of advantages to prejudice others.

Prov. xii. 16. xix. 11.

He ſometimes may repreſs inſurrections of anger or diſguſt: but he never doth allow them to bake into rancour or malice.

He may be apt to uſe courteous, affable, obliging demeanour, ſerving to breed friendſhips, and to ſtifle enmities: but he never thereby meaneth to gull, inveigle, and entrap men; or to procure inſtruments and aids of any perverſe deſign.

He is no enemy to himſelf, but (according to the obligations of reaſon and conſcience) he hath always a regard to the good of others; nor is ever ſo ſelfiſh, as to be unjuſt or uncharitable to any man.

The principal engines he doth employ for achieving his enterpriſes are, a careful and cautious providence in contriving, a ſedulous and ſteady diligence in acting, a circumſpect heedfulneſs not to provoke any man by offenſive carriage, by injury, by diſcourteſy, to obſtruct him, but rather by kind demonſtrations and real beneficence to engage men to further him in his proceedings:

but eſpecially his main inſtrument, wherein he moſt confideth, is devout ſupplication to God for his ſuccour and bleſſing. SERM. V.

Now is not this conduct the moſt ſecure that can be? doth it not afford many great commodities and advantages? doth it not exempt from manifold fears, and cares, and croſſes, and ſlaveries?

It cannot but derive bleſſings from the God of truth, the great friend of ſimplicity and ſincerity, the hater of falſehood and guile. Prov. xii. 19. 22.

And humanly regarding things, he that uſeth theſe methods, doth from them obtain many conveniences. He doth not lie under perpetual conſtraint, engaged to keep a conſtant guard upon himſelf, to watch his memory, to curb his tongue, to manage his very looks and geſtures, leſt they betray his intentions, and diſcloſe his plots. He is not at the trouble of ſtopping holes, of mending flaws, of patching up repugnances in his actions, that his mind do not break through them. He is not afraid of the diſappointment and ſhame which attend the detection of unworthy deſigns. He is not at pains to obviate the jealouſies, the ſurmiſes, the diffidences, the counterplots, the preventive oppoſitions and aſſaults, which gloomy cloſeneſs and crafty diſſimulation ever do raiſe againſt the practiſers of them. In fine, men do not ſhun the converſation and the commerce of an upright perſon, but gladly do conſort and deal with him; do ſeek his acquaintance and alliance: they are not apt to diſtruſt him, to ſuſpect him, to be ſhy and reſerved in their intercourſe with him; but readily do place an entire confidence in him, and uſe a clear frankneſs toward him. No man doth fear him as dangerous, or will croſs him as an adverſary. Whence as he ſeldom hath cauſe to fear, or occaſion to conteſt with others; ſo he doth undiſturbedly enjoy the benefits of ſociety with great ſafety, eaſe, and comfort. Prov. xxvi. 25. x. 18. xxi. 6. Pſal. xxvi. 4.

IX. Laſtly, an upright walker hath perfect ſecurity, as to the final reſult of affairs, that he ſhall not be quite baffled in his expectations and deſires. And if proſperity doth con-

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ſiſt in a ſatisfaction of mind concerning events, he cannot fail of moſt proſperous ſucceſs. *Whatſoever he doeth,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt of him, *it ſhall proſper.* How is that? Doth he, if he warreth, always get the victory? is he perpetually, when he tradeth, a conſiderable gainer? will he certainly, after ſowing, reap a plentiful crop? Probably yes; and perhaps no. Yet aſſuredly he ſhall proſper, in the true notion of proſperity, explained by theſe divine ſayings: *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever. Surely I know it ſhall be well with them that fear God.*

Pſal. i. 3. Prov. xii. 21. Pſ. xxxvii. 37. Iſa. xxxii. 17. Eccleſ. viii. 12.

He cannot be much defeated in his purpoſes: for, as to his general, principal, abſolute deſigns, (that is, his deſign of pleaſing God, and procuring his favour; his deſign of ſatisfying himſelf, and diſcharging his conſcience; his deſign of promoting his own ſpiritual intereſt, and ſaving his ſoul; his deſign of doing good, of exerciſing charity to his neighbour, of ſerving the public, of obliging the world by virtuous example, and by real beneficence;) theſe he cannot fail throughly to accompliſh; nothing can obſtruct him in the proſecution, nothing can debar him from the execution of theſe undertakings; in ſpite of all the world, by the ſuccour of that divine grace which ever doth favour and further ſuch deſigns, he moſt happily will achieve them. And for other inferior deſigns, he can hardly be croſſed in regard to them: for it is an eſſential part of integrity, not otherwiſe to affect or aim at private ſecular intereſts, than under condition, and with a reſervation, if it be God's pleaſure, if it ſeem good to divine wiſdom. He knoweth that his pains employed on any honeſt purpoſe, in a fair way, (be it to procure ſome worldly advantage for himſelf, for his relations, or for his friend,) are not loſt, if they have the fruit of ſubmiſſion to God's will, and acquieſcence in the event diſpoſed by him. He is aſſured that it is good luck to have his project blaſted, and that miſſing is better than getting, when by ſovereign wiſdom it is ſo determined. He there-

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fere could not ſo fix his heart, or engage his affection in any ſuch concern, that his mind is ſurpriſed, or his paſſions diſcompoſed by a ſeeming adverſeneſs of events to his endeavours. So that in effect he can have no bad ſucceſs. For how can that occurrence be deemed bad, which plain reaſon dictateth in certain judgment to be moſt expedient for him; about which he ever was very indifferent, and with which at preſent he is not heartily diſpleaſed? How can it be taken for diſappointment and misfortune, which one was prepared to embrace with ſatisfaction and complacence?

Yea, to a perſon ſo diſpoſed, that ſucceſs which ſeemeth moſt adverſe, juſtly may be reputed the beſt and moſt happy, as promoting ends incomparably more excellent than any worldly gain; as producing fruits exceedingly more wholeſome and more ſavoury than any temporal commodity; as exerciſing and improving the divineſt virtues, (humility, patience, meekneſs, moderation, contentedneſs,) a grain whereof is worth all the wealth, all the preferment, all that is deſirable in the world.

Wherefore let the worſt that can arrive, (or that which human blindneſs and fondneſs do count the worſt,) yet upright perſons do not come off ill, or ſo (matters being rightly ſtated) as to be loſers upon the foot of the account.

If this do not ſatisfy groſſer apprehenſions, we may add, that even in theſe meaner concerns Almighty God is pleaſed commonly to reward and encourage upright perſons by the beſt ſucceſs. For he hath as it were a natural inclination to gratify thoſe who deſire to pleaſe him; and, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth it, *hath pleaſure in the proſperity of his ſervants.* He may ſeem concerned in honour to countenance thoſe who have regard to his will, and who repoſe confidence in his aid; diſcriminating them from ſuch as preſume to act againſt or without him, in defiance to his will, with no deference to his providence. As they do render him his due reſpect, by ſubmitting to his authority, and avowing his power; ſo he will acknowledge them by ſignally favouring their concerns. Even his

Pſal. xxxv. 27. Prov. xi. 20. xv. 9.

Prov. xiv. 2.

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truth and fidelity are engaged in their behalf; ſeeing he very often hath declared and promiſed, that in all matters, and upon all occaſions, he will be ready to bleſs them.

Deut. xxviii. 2. xxx. 9. Pſ. cxxviii. 1, 2. xci. 1. xxxiv. 9, 10. lxxxiv. 11. Matt. vi. 33. Eccleſ. viii. 5. Prov. xxviii. 10. 20. x. 6. (Prov. xi. 18.)

X. To conclude; It is an infinite advantage of upright dealing, that at the laſt iſſue, when all things ſhall be moſt accurately tried and impartially decided, a man is aſſured to be fully juſtified in it, and plentifully rewarded for it. As then all the deceits, which now paſs under ſpecious maſks, ſhall be laid bare; all varniſh of pretence ſhall be wiped off; all perverſe intrigues ſhall be unravelled; all wicked and baſe intentions ſhall be quite ſtripped of the veils which now enfold them; all ſhrewd contrivers and engineers of miſchief, all practiſers of unjuſt and malicious guile, ſhall be expoſed to ſhame, *ſhall lie down in ſorrow:* ſo then *the righteous man ſhall ſtand in great boldneſs;* his caſe will be rightly ſtated, and fully cleared from ſlanderous aſperſions, from odious ſurmiſes, from unlucky prejudices and miſtakes: what he hath done ſhall be approved; what he hath ſuffered ſhall be repaired. So that it then evidently will appear, that upright ſimplicity is the deepeſt wiſdom, and perverſe craft the meereſt ſhallowneſs; that he who is true and juſt to others, is moſt faithful and friendly to himſelf; that whoever doth abuſe his neighbour, is his own greateſt cheater and foe.

Rom. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iii. 13. iv. 5. 1 Tim. i. 17.

For, *In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt. The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts; and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.* Unto which our upright Judge, *the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

SERMON VI.

OF THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

1 THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceaſing.

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IT is the manner of St. Paul in his Epiſtles, after that he hath diſcuſſed ſome main points of doctrine or diſcipline, (which occaſion required that he ſhould clear and ſettle,) to propoſe ſeveral good advices and rules, in the obſervance whereof the life of Chriſtian practice doth conſiſt. So that he thereby hath furniſhed us with ſo rich a variety of moral and ſpiritual precepts, concerning ſpecial matters, ſubordinate to the general laws of piety and virtue; that out of them might well be compiled a body of ethics, or ſyſtem of precepts *de officiis*, in truth and in completeneſs far excelling thoſe which any philoſophy hath been able to deviſe, or deliver. Theſe he rangeth not in any formal method, nor linketh together with ſtrict connection, but freely ſcattereth them, ſo as from his mind (as out of a fertile ſoil, impregnated with all ſeeds of wiſdom and goodneſs) they did aptly ſpring up, or as they were ſuggeſted by that holy Spirit which continually guided and governed him.

Among divers ſuch delivered here, this is one, which ſhall be the ſubject of my preſent diſcourſe; the which, having no other plain coherence (except by affinity of matter) with the reſt incloſing it, I ſhall conſider abſo-

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Pray without ceaſing. For underſtanding theſe words, let us firſt conſider what is meant by the act enjoined, *praying;* then, what the qualification or circumſtance adjoined, *without ceaſing*, doth import.

1. The word *prayer* doth, in its uſual latitude of acception, comprehend all ſorts of devotion, or all that part of religious practice, wherein we do immediately addreſs ourſelves to God, having by ſpeech (oral or mental) a kind of intercourſe and converſation with him. So it includeth that praiſe which we ſhould yield to God, implying our due eſteem of his moſt excellent perfections, moſt glorious works, moſt juſt and wiſe diſpenſations of providence and grace; that thankſgiving whereby we ſhould expreſs an affectionate reſentment of our obligation to him for the numberleſs great benefits we receive from him; that acknowledgment of our entire dependence upon him, or our total ſubjection to his power and pleaſure; together with that profeſſion of faith in him, and avowing of ſervice to him, which we do owe as his natural creatures and ſubjects; that humble confeſſion of our infirmity, our vileneſs, our guilt, our miſery, (joined with deprecation of wrath and vengeance,) which is due from us as wretched men, and grievous ſinners; that petition of things needful or convenient for us, (of ſupply in our wants, of ſuccour and comfort in our diſtreſſes, of direction and aſſiſtance in our undertakings, of mercy and pardon for our offences,) which our natural ſtate (our poor, weak, ſad, and ſinful ſtate) doth engage us to ſeek; that interceſſion for others, which general charity or ſpecial relation do require from us, as concerned or obliged to deſire and promote their good. All theſe religious performances prayer, in its larger notion, doth compriſe; according whereto in common uſe the whole body of divine ſervice, containing all ſuch acts, is termed *prayer;* and temples, conſecrated to the performance of all holy duties, are ſtyled *houſes of prayer;* and that brief directory, or pregnant form of all devotion, which our Lord

dictated, is called *his prayer:* and in numberleſs places of Scripture it is ſo taken. SERM. VI.

In a ſtricter ſenſe, it doth only ſignify one particular act among thoſe, the petition of things needful or uſeful for us.

But according to the former more comprehenſive meaning, I chooſe to underſtand it here; both becauſe it is moſt commonly ſo uſed, (then, eſpecially, when no diſtinctive limitation is annexed, or the nature of the ſubject matter doth not reſtrain it,) and becauſe general reaſons do equally oblige to performance of all theſe duties in the manner here preſcribed: nor is there any ground to exclude any part of devotion from continual uſe; we being obliged no leſs inceſſantly to praiſe God for his excellencies, and thank him for his benefits, to avow his ſovereign majeſty and authority, to confeſs our infirmities and miſcarriages, than to beg help and mercy from God. All devotion therefore, all ſorts of proper and due addreſs to God, (that πᾶσα προσευχὴ, *all prayer and ſupplication*, which St. Paul otherwhere ſpeaketh of) are here enjoined, according to the manner adjoined, *without ceaſing*, ἀδιαλείπτως, that is, indefinently, or continually. Eph. vi. 18.

2. For the meaning of which expreſſion, we muſt ſuppoſe, that it muſt not be underſtood as if we were obliged in every inſtant or ſingular point of time actually to apply our minds to this practice; for to do thus is in itſelf impoſſible, and therefore can be no matter of duty; it is inconſiſtent with other duties, and therefore muſt not be practiſed; yea, will not conſiſt with itſelf; for, that we may pray, we muſt live; that we may live, we muſt eat; that we may eat, we muſt work; and muſt therefore attend other matters: ſo that actual devotion neither muſt nor can ſwallow up all our time and care. The deliberate operations of our mind are ſometimes interrupted by ſleep, ſometimes will be taken up in ſatisfying our natural appetites, ſometimes muſt be ſpent in attendance upon other reaſonable employments, commanded or allowed by God; whence there can be no obligation to this prac-

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tice according to that unlimited interpretation. This precept therefore (as divers others of a like general purport and expreſſion) muſt be underſtood not in a natural, but moral ſenſe, according as the exigence of things permitteth, or as the reaſon of the caſe requireth; ſo far as it is conveniently practicable, or as it is reaſonably compatible with other duties and needs. But we muſt not ſo reſtrain it as to wrong it, by pinching it within too narrow bounds. How then it may be underſtood, and how far it ſhould extend, we ſhall endeavour to declare by propounding divers ſenſes whereof it is capable, grounded upon plain teſtimonies of Scripture, and enforcible by good reaſon; according to which ſenſes we ſhall together preſs the obſervance thereof.

Adoro Scripturæ plenitudinem. *Tert.*

I. Firſt then, *praying inceſſantly* may import the maintaining in our ſouls a ready diſpoſition or habitual inclination to devotion; that which in Scripture is termed *the ſpirit of ſupplication.* This in moral eſteem, and according to current language, derived thence, amounteth to a continual practice; a man being reckoned and ſaid to do that, to which he is ever prompt and propenſe: as it is ſaid of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful, and lendeth,* becauſe he is conſtantly diſpoſed to ſupply his neighbour with needful relief; although he doth not ever actually diſpenſe alms, or furniſh his neighbour with ſupplies for his neceſſity. The words may ſignify this; they do at leaſt by conſequence imply ſo much: for if we do not in this, we can hardly perform the duty in any ſenſe; without a good temper fitting, and a good appetite prompting to devotion, we ſcarce can or will ever apply ourſelves thereto. If there be not in our heart a root of devotion, whence ſhould it ſpring? how can it live, or thrive? If the organs of prayer are out of kelter, or out of tune, how can we pray? If we be not *accincti*, have not *the loins of our mind girt*, and *our feet ſhod in preparation* to the ſervice, when ſhall we ſet forward thereto? *My heart*, ſaid David, *is fixed, I will ſing and give praiſe: fixed*, that is, readily prepared, and ſteadily inclined to devotion. So ſhould ours conſtantly be. As a true

Zech. xii. 10.

Pſ. xxxvii. 26.

Ut quamvis tacet Hermogenes, cantor tamen æque eſt, &c. *Hor.*

1 Pet. i. 13. Luke xii. 35. Eph. vi. 14.

Pſ. cviii. 1. (2 Chron. xxx. 19. Ezr. vii. 10.)

friend is ever ready to entertain his friend with a frank courteſy and complacency; as he ever is apt upon occaſion for advice and aſſiſtance to have recourſe to him: ſo ſhould we be always diſpoſed cheerfully and decently to converſe with God, when he freely cometh to us, or we have need to apply ourſelves to him. If there be (from ſtupidity of mind, from coldneſs of affection, from ſluggiſhneſs of ſpirit, from worldly diſtraction) any indiſpoſition or averſeneſs thereto, we ſhould, by ſerious conſideration and induſtrious care, labour to remove them; rouſing our ſpirits, and kindling in our affections ſome fervency of deſire toward ſpiritual things: otherwiſe we ſhall be apt to ſhun, or to ſlip the opportunities inviting to devotion; our hearts will be ſo reſty, or liſtleſs, that hardly we ſhall be induced to perform it, when it is moſt neceſſary or uſeful for us. SERM. VI.

II. *Praying inceſſantly* may denote a vigilant attendance (with earneſt regard, and firm purpoſe) employed upon devotion: ſuch attendance as men uſually beſtow on their affairs, whereof although the actual proſecution ſometime doth ſtick, yet the deſign continually proceedeth; the mind ever ſo directing its eye toward them, as quickly to eſpy, and readily to ſnatch any advantages of promoting them. This is a kind of continuance in practice, and is commonly ſo termed: as we ſay, that ſuch an one is building a houſe, is writing a book, is occupying ſuch land, although he be at preſent ſleeping, or eating, or following any other buſineſs; becauſe his main deſign never ſleepeth, and his purpoſe continues uninterrupted. This is that which is ſo often enjoined under the phraſe of *watching* about prayer. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always,* ſaith our Lord. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame,* ſaith St. Paul. *Be ye ſober, and watch unto prayer,* ſaith St. Peter. Which expreſſions import a moſt conſtant and careful attendance upon this duty: that we do not make it a παάεργον, or bye-buſineſs in our life, (a matter of ſmall conſideration or indifference, of curioſity, of chance,) to be tranſacted drowſily or faintly, with a deſultorious and ſlight endeavour, by fits, as the

Luke xxi. 36. Col. iv. 2. Eph. vi. 18. 1 Pet. iv. 7. Matt. xxiv. 42. xxv. 13.

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humour taketh us; but that, accounting it a buſineſs of the choiceſt nature and weightieſt moment, we do adhere thereto with unmoveable purpoſe, regard it with undiſtracted attention, purſue it with unwearied diligence, being always upon the guard, wakeful and expedite, intent upon and apt to cloſe with any occaſion ſuggeſting matter thereof. That we ſhould do thus reaſon alſo doth oblige: for that, as in truth no buſineſs doth better deſerve our utmoſt reſolution and care; ſo none doth more need them; nature being ſo backward, and occaſion ſo ſlippery, that if we do not ever mind it, we ſhall ſeldom practiſe it.

2 Pet. i. 12. ἀεὶ ὑπομιμν. Gal. iv. 18. πάντοτε ζηλοῦσθαι.

III. *Praying inceſſantly* may ſignify, that we do actually embrace all fit ſeaſons and emergent occaſions of devotion. This in moral computation doth paſs for continual performance: as a tree is ſaid to bear that fruit, which it produceth in the ſeaſon; and a man is accounted to work in that trade, which he exerciſeth whenever he is called thereto. This ſenſe is in ſeveral precepts parallel to that in hand plainly expreſſed. *Pray*, ſaith St. Paul, *with all prayer and ſupplication*, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ· and, *Watch*, ſaith our Lord, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι, *praying in every ſeaſon*, or upon every opportunity. Devotion, indeed, is rarely unſeaſonable, or impertinent: we may offer it εὐκαίρως, ἀκαίρως, *in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon*; that is, not only taking opportunities preſented for it, or urgently requiring it, but catching at them, and creating them to ourſelves, when there is no ſuch apparent and preſſing need of it. But there are ſome ſpecial occaſions, which more importunately and indiſpenſably do exact it: ſome ſeaſons there are, (either miniſtered by extrinſical accidents, or ſpringing from internal diſpoſitions,) when, without both great blame and much damage to ourſelves, we cannot neglect it: times there be moſt proper and acceptable, when we do eſpecially need to pray, and when we are likely to ſpeed well therein. *Every one*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *that is godly will pray unto thee in a time when thou mayeſt be found*: and, *My prayer*, ſaith he again, *is unto thee in an acceptable time.*

Eph. vi. 18. Luke xxi. 36. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Pſal. xxxii. 6. lxix. 13. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Iſa. xlix. 8.

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Thus, when we have received any ſingular bleſſing or notable favour from God, when proſperous ſucceſs hath attended our honeſt enterpriſes, when we have been happily reſcued from imminent dangers, when we have been ſupported in difficulties, or relieved in wants and ſtraits; then is it ſeaſonable to render ſacrifices of thankſgiving and praiſe to the God of victory, help, and mercy; to admire and celebrate him, who is our *ſtrength, and* our *deliverer,* our *faithful refuge in trouble,* our *fortreſs, and the rock of* our *ſalvation.* To omit this piece of devotion then is vile ingratitude, or ſtupid negligence and ſloth. Pſal. xviii. 1, 2. lxxi. 3, &c.

When any rare object or remarkable occurrence doth, upon this theatre of the world, preſent itſelf to our view, in ſurveying the glorious works of nature, or the ſtrange events of Providence; then is a proper occaſion ſuggeſted to ſend up hymns of praiſe to the power, the wiſdom, the goodneſs of the world's great Creator and Governor.

When we undertake any buſineſs of ſpecial moment and difficulty, then it is expedient (wiſdom prompting it) to ſue for God's aid, to commit our affairs into his hand, to recommend our endeavours to the bleſſing of him, by whoſe guidance all things are ordered, without whoſe concourſe nothing can be effected, upon whoſe arbitrary diſpoſal all ſucceſs dependeth. Δεῖ πάσης προσέξεως προσεύξασθαι προτεχόν. Marc. Erem.

The beginning of any deſign or buſineſs (although ordinary, if conſiderable) is a proper ſeaſon of prayer unto him, to whoſe bounty and favour we owe our ability to act, ſupport in our proceedings, any comfortable iſſue of what we do: (for *all our ſufficiency is of him: without him we can do nothing.*) Whence we can never apply ourſelves to any buſineſs or work, not go to eat, to ſleep, to travel, to trade, to ſtudy, with any true content, any reaſonable ſecurity, any ſatisfactory hope, if we do not firſt humbly implore the favourable protection, guidance, and aſſiſtance of God. 2 Cor. iii. 5. John xv. 5.

When we do fall into doubts, or darkneſſes, (in the courſe either of our ſpiritual or ſecular affairs,) not knowing what courſe to ſteer, or which way to turn ourſelves; (a caſe which to ſo blind and filly creatures, as we are,

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must often happen;) then doth the time bid us to conſult the great Oracle of truth, *the mighty Counſellor, the Father of lights,* ſeeking reſolution and ſatisfaction, light and wiſdom from him; ſaying with the Pſalmiſt, *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my ſalvation: Order my ſteps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me;* following the advice of St. James, *If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him.*

Jer. x. 23. Prov. xx. 24. xvi 9. Iſa. ix, 6. Jam. i. 17. Pſal. xxv. 4, 5. 8. xxvii. 11. lxxxvi. 11. cxliii. 10. xxxii. 8. cxix. 125. 133. Jam. i. 5.

When any ſtorm of danger bluſtereth about us, perilouſly threatening, or furiouſly aſſailing us with miſchief, (ſo that hardly by our own ſtrength or wit we can hope to evade,) then with the wings of ardent devotion we ſhould fly unto God for ſhelter and for relief.

Prov. ii. 6. Iſa. xxx. 1. Pſal. lvi. 3. xxxiv. 4. xviii. 3.

When any anxious care diſtracteth, or any heavy burden preſſeth our minds, we ſhould by prayer eaſe ourſelves of them, and diſcharge them upon God, committing the matter of them to his care and providence; according to that direction of St. Paul, *Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving let your requeſts be made known to God.*

Phil. iv. 6.

When we do lie under any irkſome trouble, or ſore diſtreſs, (of want, pain, diſgrace,) then, for ſuccour and ſupport, for eaſe and comfort, we ſhould have recourſe to *the Father of pities, and God of all conſolation; who is nigh to all that call upon him, will alſo hear their cry, and will ſave them;* who, when *the righteous cry, doth hear them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles;* who is ſo often ſtyled *the hiding-place from troubles, the help and ſtrength, the ſhield and buckler, the rock, the fortreſs, the high tower, the horn of ſalvation,* to all good and diſtreſſed people. To him we ſhould in ſuch a condition have recourſe, imitating the pious Pſalmiſt, whoſe practice was this: *In the day of my trouble I ſought the Lord: I poured out my complaint before him, I ſhewed before him my trouble: I called unto the Lord in my diſtreſs: the Lord anſwered me, and ſet me in a large place.*

2 Cor. i. 3. Pſal. cxlv. 18, 19. cxlvii. 3. xxxiv. 17. xviii. 1, 2. lvi. 3. lxxxiv. 9. xxxii. 7. xxxiii. 20. lxxi. 3.

Pſal. lxxvii. 2. xviii. 6. cxlii. 2. cxviii. 5.

When any ſtrong temptation doth invade us, with which by our own ſtrength we cannot grapple, but are like to ſink and faulter under it; then is it opportune and needful that we ſhould ſeek to God for a ſupply of ſpiritual forces, and the ſuccour of his almighty grace, as St. Paul did: when *there was given to him a thorn in the fleſh, a meſſenger of Satan to buffet him;* then *he beſought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him:* and he had this return from God, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* SERM. VI. 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9.

When alſo (from ignorance or miſtake, from inadvertency, negligence, or raſhneſs, from weakneſs, from wantonneſs, from preſumption) we have tranſgreſſed our duty, and incurred ſinful guilt; then, (for avoiding the conſequent danger and vengeance, for unloading our conſciences of the burden and diſcomfort thereof,) with humble confeſſion in our mouths, and ſerious contrition in our hearts, we ſhould apply ourſelves to the God of mercy, deprecating his wrath, and imploring pardon from him; remembering that promiſe of St. John, *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all iniquity;* and that declaration of the Wiſe Man, *He that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper, but he that confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall have mercy.* 1 John i. 9. Prov. xxviii. 13. Pſal. xxxii. 5. li. 1, &c. Job vii. 20.

In theſe and the like caſes God by our neceſſities doth invite and ſummon us to come unto him; and no leſs fooliſh than impious we are, if we do then ſlink away, or fly from him. Then we ſhould (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews exhorteth) *come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,* (or, *for ſeaſonable relief.) Heb. iv. 16. * εἰς εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν.

And beſide thoſe outwardly prompting and urging us, there be other opportunities, ſpringing from within us, which we are no leſs obliged and concerned to embrace. When God by his gentle whiſpers calleth us, or by his ſoft impulſes draweth us into his preſence; we ſhould then take heed of ſtopping our ears, or turning our hearts from him, refuſing to hearken, or to comply. Jer. xxxv. 15. Prov. i. 24. Iſa. l. 2. lxv. 12. lxvi. 4.

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We muſt not any wiſe quench or damp any ſparks of devout affection kindled in us by the divine Spirit; we muſt not repel or reſiſt any of his kindly ſuggeſtions or motions.

Whenever we find ourſelves well affected to, or well framed for devotion; that we have a lively ſenſe of, and a coming appetite to ſpiritual things; that our ſpirits are briſk and pure, our fancy calm and clear, our hearts tender and ſupple, our affections warm and nimble; then a fair ſeaſon offereth itſelf; and when the iron is ſo hot, we ſhould ſtrike.

If at any time we feel any forward inclinations or good diſpoſitions to the practice of this duty, we ſhould never check or curb them, but rather ſhould promote and advance them; puſhing ourſelves forward in this hopeful career; letting out the ſtream of our affections into this right channel, that it may run freely therein, that it may overflow and diffuſe itſelf in exuberance of devotion. Farther,

IV. *Praying inceſſantly* may ſignify, that we ſhould with aſſiduous urgency drive on the intent of our prayers, never quitting it, or deſiſting, till our requeſts are granted, or our deſires are accompliſhed. Thus doing we may be ſaid to pray continually: as he that goeth forward in his journey, (although he ſometime doth bait, ſometime doth reſt and repoſe himſelf,) is ſaid yet to be in travel; or as he that doth not wave the proſecution of his cauſe, (although ſome demurs intervene,) is deemed ſtill to be in ſuit. This is that which our Lord did in the Goſpel preſcribe and perſuade, where it is recorded of him, that

Luke xviii. 1. *He ſpake a parable unto them, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* That *praying always* the enſuing diſcourſe ſheweth to import reſtleſs importunity, and perſeverance in prayer: the ſame which ſo often is commended to us by the phraſes of *μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, not to faint* or *faulter*; *μὴ παύεσθαι, not to ceaſe*, or give over; *προσκαρτερεῖν, to continue inſtant*, or hold out ſtoutly; *ἀγωνίζεσθαι, to ſtrive earneſtly*, or conteſt and ſtruggle *in prayers*; *προσμένειν ταῖς δεήσεσι, to abide at ſupplications*;

Col. i. 9. Eph. i. 16. Ro. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2, 12. 1 Tim. v. 5. Eph. vi. 18.

ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει, *to watch with all perſeverance.* That which alſo is implied by thoſe terms, which in ſcriptural ſtyle do commonly expreſs devotion: by [a] *ſeeking God*; which implieth, that God doth not preſently, upon any ſlight addreſs, diſcover himſelf in beneficial effects anſwerable to our deſires, but after a careful and painful continuance in our applications to him: by [b] *waiting upon God*; which ſignifieth, that if God do not preſently appear, granting our requeſts, we ſhould patiently ſtay, expecting till he be pleaſed to do it in his own beſt time, according to that in the Pſalm, [c] *Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us*: by *knocking*; which intimateth, that the door of grace doth not ever ſtand open, or that we can have an effectual acceſs to God, until he, warned, and as it were excited, by our earneſt importunity, pleaſeth to liſten, to diſcloſe himſelf, to come forth unto us.

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[a] Pſal. x. 4. xi. 10. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxiii. 1. lxix. 6, 32. lxx. 4. lxxxiii. 16. Job viii. 5. Deut. iv. 29. Prov. viii. 17. Pſ. lxxvii. 6. [b] Pſ. cxxiii. 2. lxix. 3. cxxx. 5. xxxvii. 7. xxv. 5. xxvii. 14. xxxvii. 34. xxv. 21. lii. 9. lix. 9. cxlv. 15. Iſa. viii. 17. xl. 31. xlix. 23. Hoſ. xii. 6. Lam. iii. 25, 26. Prov. xx. 22. Pſ. cxxiii. 2. Luke xii. 36. Matt. vii. 7. Vid. Chryſ. tom. vi. Orat. viii. ad Theod. 2.

And this practice reaſon alſo doth enforce. For there are ſome good things abſolutely neceſſary for our ſpiritual life and welfare, (ſuch as are freedom from bad inclinations, diſorderly affections, vicious habits, and noxious errors; the ſanctifying preſence and influence of God's holy Spirit, with the bleſſed graces and ſweet fruits thereof; growth in virtue, delight in ſpiritual things, the ſenſe of God's love and favour, with the like,) which good reaſon engageth us perſeveringly to ſeek, as never to reſt or be ſatisfied till we have acquired them in perfect degree; ſince we cannot ever do well without them, or ever get enough of them. In begging other inferior things, it may become us to be reſerved, indifferent, and modeſt; but about theſe matters (wherein all our felicity is extremely concerned) it were a folly to be ſlack or timorous: as we cannot be ſaid immoderately to deſire them, ſo we cannot be ſuppoſed immodeſtly to ſeek them there, where only they can be found, in God's preſence and hand. The caſe doth bear, yea, doth require, that we ſhould be eager and hot, reſolute and ſtiff, free and bold, yea, in a manner peremptory and impudent ſolicitors with God for them. So our Saviour intimateth,

Αἰδὼς οὖν ἀγαθὴ κεχαμένῳ ἀνδρὶ πρέπει.

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where, comparing the manner of God's proceeding with that of men, he repreſenteth one friend yielding needful ſuccour to another, not barely upon the ſcore of friendſhip, but διὰ τὴν ἀναίδειαν, *for his impudence;* that is, for his confident and continued urgency, admitting no refuſal or excuſe. So doth God, in ſuch caſes, allow and oblige us to deal with him, being inſtant and pertinacious in our requeſts, *giving him no reſt,* (as the phraſe is in the Prophet;) not enduring to be put off, or brooking any repulſe; never being diſcouraged, or caſt into deſpair, by any delay or ſemblance of neglect. We may *wreſtle with God,* like Jacob, and with Jacob may ſay, *I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.* Thus God ſuffereth himſelf to be prevailed upon, and is willingly overcome: thus Omnipotence may be maſtered, and a happy victory may be gained over Invincibility itſelf. Heaven ſometime may be forced by ſtorm, (or by the aſſaults of extremely fervent prayer;) it aſſuredly will yield to a long ſiege. God will not ever hold out againſt the attempts of an obſtinate ſuppliant. So *the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* We read in St. John's Goſpel of a man, that, being thirty-eight years diſeaſed, did wait at the pool of Bethesda ſeeking relief: him our Lord pitied and helped, crowning his patience with miraculous relief, and propoſing it for an example to us of perſeverance. It is ſaid of the Patriarch Iſaac, that *he intreated the Lord for his wife, becauſe ſhe was barren; and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebecca his wife conceived.* Whereupon St. Chryſoſtom doth obſerve, that he had perſevered twenty years in that petition.

Luke xi. 8.
Iſa. lxii. 7.
Gen. xxxii. 26.
Matt. xi. 12.
John v. 5.
Vid. Chryſ. tom. v. Orat. 40. and in Joh. Or. 36.
Gen. xxv. 21.
Vid. tom. vi. Orat. 68.

Of good ſucceſs to this practice we have many aſſurances in holy Scripture. *The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the ſoul that ſeeketh him. Bleſſed are all they that wait for him. None that wait on him ſhall be aſhamed.* [a] *They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles; they ſhall run, and not be weary; they ſhall walk, and not faint.* So hath God aſſured by his word, and engaged himſelf by promiſe, that he will yield unto conſtant

Lam. iii. 25.
Iſa. xxx. 18. xlix. 23.
Pſ. xxv. 3. xxxvii. 9.
[a] Iſa. xl. 31.
1 Chron. xxviii. 9.
Ezr. viii. 22.
Amos v. 4.
2 Chr. xv. 12.
Pſ. ix. 10.

Seeking God, the periphraſis of a religious man. Pſ. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxix. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

and patient devotion; ſo that it ſhall never want good ſucceſs. SERM. VI.

Without this practice we cannot indeed hope to obtain thoſe precious things; they will not come at an eaſy rate, or be given for a ſong; a lazy wiſh or two cannot fetch them down from heaven. God will not beſtow them at firſt aſking, or deal them out in one lump: but it is upon affiduous ſoliciting, and by gradual communication, that he diſpenſeth them. So his wiſe good-will, for many ſpecial reaſons, diſpoſeth him to proceed: that we may (as it becometh and behoveth us) abide under a continual ſenſe of our natural impotency and penury; of our dependance upon God, and obligation to him for the free collation of thoſe beſt gifts: that by ſome difficulty of procuring them we may be minded of their worth, and induced the more to prize them: that by earneſtly ſeeking them we may improve our ſpiritual appetites, and excite holy affections: that by much converſing with heaven our minds may be raiſed above earthly things, and our hearts purified from ſordid deſires: that we may have a conſtant employment anſwerable to the beſt capacities of our ſouls, worthy our care and pain, yielding moſt ſolid profit and pure delight unto us: that, in fine, by our greater endeavour in religious practice we may obtain a more ample reward thereof.

For the ſame reaſon indeed that we pray at all, we ſhould pray thus with continued inſtance. We do not pray to inſtruct or adviſe God; not to tell him news, or inform him of our wants: (*He knows them*, as our Saviour telleth us, *before we aſk:*) nor do we pray by dint of argument to perſuade God, and bring him to our bent; nor that by fair ſpeech we may cajole him or move his affections toward us by pathetical orations: not for any ſuch purpoſe are we obliged to pray. But for that it becometh and behoveth us ſo to do, becauſe it is a proper inſtrument of bettering, ennobling, and perfecting our ſouls; becauſe it breedeth moſt holy affections, and pure ſatisfactions, and worthy reſolutions; becauſe it fitteth us for the enjoyment of happineſs, and leadeth us Matt. vi. 8

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thither: for ſuch ends devotion is preſcribed; and conſtant perſeverance therein being needful to thoſe purpoſes, (praying by fits and ſtarts not ſufficing to accompliſh them,) therefore ſuch perſeverance is required of us. Farther,

V. *Praying inceſſantly* may import, that we do with all our occupations and all occurrences interlace devout ejaculations of prayer and praiſe; lifting up our hearts to God, and breathing forth expreſſions of devotion, ſuitable to the objects and occaſions which preſent themſelves. This as it nearly doth approach to the punctual accompliſhment of what our text preſcribeth, ſo it ſeemeth required by St. Paul, when he biddeth us *pray always in* πνεύματι, *in ſpirit*, and to ſing ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, *in the heart*: that is, with very frequent elevations of ſpirit in holy thoughts and deſires toward heaven; with opportune reſentments of heart, directing thanks and praiſe to God. We cannot ever be framing or venting long prayers with our lips, but almoſt ever our mind can throw pious glances, our heart may dart good wiſhes upwards; ſo that hardly any moment (any conſiderable ſpace of time) ſhall paſs without ſome lightſome flaſhes of devotion [a]. As bodily reſpiration, without intermiſſion or impediment, doth concur with all our actions; ſo may that breathing of ſoul, which preſerveth our ſpiritual life, and ventilateth that holy flame within us, well conſpire with all other occupations [b]. For devotion is of a nature ſo ſpiritual, ſo ſubtile, and penetrant, that no matter can exclude or obſtruct it. Our minds are ſo exceedingly nimble and active, that no buſineſs can hold pace with them, or exhauſt their attention and activity. We can never be ſo fully poſſeſſed by any employment, but that divers vacuities of time do intercur, wherein our thoughts and affections will be diverted to other matters. As a covetous man, what-

Eph. vi. 18. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.

[a] Sed non ſatis perſpiciunt quantum natura humani ingenii valeat, quæ ita eſt agilis et velox, ſic in omnem partem (ut ita dixerim) ſpectat, ut ne poſſit quidem aliquid agere tantum unum; in plura vero non eodem die modo, ſed eodem temporis momento, vim ſuam impendat. *Quint.* i. 12.

[b] Μνημονευτέον γὰρ Θεοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀναπνευστέον· καὶ εἰ οἷόν τε τοῦτο εἶναι, μηδὲν ἄλλο τι ἢ τοῦτο πρακτέον. *Naz. Or.* 33.

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ever beſide he is doing, will be carking about his bags and treaſures; an ambitious man will be deviſing on his plots and projects; a voluptuous man will have his mind in his diſhes; a laſcivious man will be doting on his amours; a ſtudious man will be muſing on his notions; every man, according to his particular inclination, will lard his buſineſs and beſprinkle all his actions with cares and wiſhes tending to the enjoyment of what he moſt eſteemeth and affecteth: ſo may a good Chriſtian, through all his undertakings, wind in devout reflections and pious motions of ſoul toward the chief object of his mind and affection. Moſt buſineſſes have wide gaps, all have ſome chinks, at which devotion may ſlip in. Be we never ſo urgently ſet or cloſely intent upon any work, (be we feeding, be we travelling, be we trading, be we ſtudying,) nothing yet can forbid, but that we may together wedge in a thought concerning God's goodneſs, and bolt forth a word of praiſe for it; but that we may reflect on our ſins, and ſpend a penitential ſigh on them; but that we may deſcry our need of God's help, and diſpatch a brief petition for it: a *God be praiſed*, a *Lord have mercy*, a *God bleſs*, or *God help me*, will nowiſe interrupt or diſturb our proceedings[c]. As worldly cares and deſires do often intrude and creep into our devotions, diſtracting and defiling them; ſo may ſpiritual thoughts and holy affections inſinuate themſelves into, and hallow our ſecular tranſactions. This practice is very poſſible, and it is no leſs expedient: for that if our employments be not thus ſeaſoned, they can have no true life or ſavour in them; they will in themſelves be dead and putrid, they will be foul and noiſome, or at leaſt flat and inſipid unto us.

Vid. Chryſ. Orat. v. in Annam, tom. v. p. 78, 79.

There are ſome other good meanings of this precept, according to which holy Scripture (backed with good reaſon) obligeth us to obſerve it: but thoſe, (together with the general inducements to the practice of this duty,) that I may not farther now treſpaſs on your patience, I ſhall reſerve to another opportunity.

[c] Εἰπὲ κατὰ διάνοιαν, Ἐλέησόν με, ὁ Θεός, καὶ ἀπήρτισαί σου ἡ ψυχή. *Chryſ.* ibid.

SERMON VII.

OF THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

1 THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceaſing.

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WHAT the *prayer* here enjoined by St. Paul doth import, and how by it univerſally all ſorts of devotion ſhould be underſtood, we did formerly diſcourſe. How alſo according to divers ſenſes (grounded in holy Scripture, and enforced by good reaſon) we may perform this duty *inceſſantly*, we did then declare; five ſuch ſenſes we did mention and proſecute: I ſhall now add two or three more, and preſs them.

VI. *Praying* then *inceſſantly* may imply, that we do appoint certain times conveniently diſtant for the practice of devotion, and carefully obſerve them. To keep the Jews in a conſtant exerciſe of divine worſhip, God did conſtitute a ſacrifice, which was called *Tamidh*, (ἡ διαπαντὸς θυσία) *the continual ſacrifice*. And as that ſacrifice, being conſtantly offered at ſet times, was thence denominated *continual*; ſo may we, by punctually obſerving fit returns of devotion, be ſaid to pray *inceſſantly*.

Dan. viii. 11. Heb. xiii. 5. Neh. x. 33.

And great reaſon there is that we ſhould do ſo. For we know that all perſons, who would not lead a looſe and flattering life, but deſign with good aſſurance and advantage to proſecute an orderly courſe of action, are wont to diſtribute their time into ſeveral parcels; aſſigning ſome part thereof to the neceſſary refection of their bodies, ſome to the convenient relaxation of their minds,

ſome to the diſpatch of their ordinary affairs, ſome alſo to familiar converſation, and interchanging good offices with their friends[d]; conſidering, that otherwiſe they ſhall be uncertain, and *unſtable in all their ways*. And in this diſtribution of time devotion ſurely ſhould not lack its ſhare: it rather juſtly claimeth the choiceſt portion to be allotted thereto, as being incomparably the nobleſt part of our duty, and maineſt concernment of our lives. The feeding our ſouls and nouriſhing our ſpiritual life, the refreſhing our ſpirits with thoſe no leſs pleaſant than wholeſome exerciſes, the driving on our correſpondence and commerce with heaven, the improving our friendſhip and intereſt with God, are affairs which above all others do beſt deſerve, and moſt need being ſecured. They muſt not therefore be left at random, to be done by the by, as it hitteth by chance, or as the fancy taketh us. If we do not depute vacant ſeaſons, and fix periodical returns for devotion, engaging ourſelves by firm reſolution, and inuring our minds by conſtant uſage to the ſtrict obſervance of them, ſecluding from them, as from ſacred encloſures, all other buſineſſes; we ſhall often be dangerouſly tempted to neglect it, we ſhall be commonly liſtleſs to it, prone to defer it, eaſily ſeduced from it by the encroachment of other affairs, or enticement of other pleaſures. It is requiſite that our ſouls alſo (no leſs than our bodies) ſhould have their meals, ſettled at ſuch intervals as the maintenance of their life, their health, their ſtrength and vigour do require; that they may not periſh or languiſh for want of timely repaſts; that a good appetite may duly ſpring up, prompting and inſtigating to them; that a ſound temper and robuſt conſtitution of ſoul may be preſerved by them. SERM. VII.

Prayers are the bulwarks of piety and good conſcience, the which ought to be placed ſo as to flank and relieve one another, together with the interjacent ſpaces of our

[d] Cur ipſi aliquid forenſibus negotiis, aliquid deſideriis amicorum, aliquid rationibus domeſticis, aliquid curæ corporis, nonnihil voluptati quotidie damus? *Quint.* i. 12.

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Heb. xii. 1.

In determining theſe ſeaſons and meaſures of time according to juſt proportion, honeſt prudence (weighing the ſeveral conditions, capacities, and circumſtances of each perſon) muſt arbitrate. For ſome difference is to be made between a merchant and a monk, between thoſe who follow a court, and thoſe who reſide in a cloiſter or a college. Some men having great encumbrances of buſineſs and duty by neceſſity impoſed on them, which conſume much of their time, and engage their thoughts; of them in reaſon, neither ſo frequent recourſes to, nor ſo long continuance in prayer can be demanded, as from thoſe who enjoy more abundant leiſure, and freer ſcope of thoughts. But ſome fit times all may and muſt allow, which no avocation of buſineſs, no diſtraction of care ſhould purloin from them.

Certain ſeaſons and periods of this kind nature itſelf (in correſpondence to her unalterable revolutions) doth ſeem to define and preſcribe: thoſe which the royal Prophet recommendeth, when he ſaith, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to ſing praiſes unto thy name, O thou moſt high: To ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs every morning, and thy faithfulneſs every night.* Every day we do recover and receive a new life from God; every morning we do commence buſineſs, or revive it; from our bed of reſt and ſecurity we then iſſue forth, expoſing ourſelves to the cares and toils, to the dangers, troubles, and temptations of the world: then eſpecially therefore it is reaſonable, that we ſhould ſacrifice thanks to the gracious preſerver of our life, and the faithful reſtorer of its ſupports and comforts; that we ſhould crave his direction and help in the purſuit of our honeſt undertakings; that to his protection from ſin and miſchief we ſhould recommend ourſelves and our affairs; that, by offering up to him the firſt-fruits of our diurnal labours, we ſhould conſecrate and conſign them all to his bleſſing; that as we are then wont to ſalute all the world, ſo then

Pſal. xcii. 1, 2. lv. 17.

chiefly with humble obeiſance we ſhould accoſt him, who is ever preſent with us, and continually watchful over us. Then alſo peculiarly devotion is moſt ſeaſonable, becauſe then our minds being leſs prepoſſeſſed and peſtered with other cares, our fancies becoming lively and gay, our memories freſh and prompt, our ſpirits copious and briſk, we are better diſpoſed for it. SERM. VII.

Every night alſo reaſon calleth for theſe duties; requiring that we ſhould cloſe our buſineſs and wind up all our cares in devotion; that we ſhould then bleſs God for his gracious preſervation of us from the manifold hazards and the ſins to which we ſtood obnoxious; that we ſhould implore his mercy for the manifold neglects and tranſgreſſions of our duty, which through the day paſt we have incurred; that our minds being then ſo tired with ſtudy and care, our ſpirits ſo waſted with labour and toil, that we cannot any longer ſuſtain ourſelves, but do of our own accord ſink down into a poſture of death, we ſhould, as dying men, reſign our ſouls into God's hand, depoſiting ourſelves and our concernments into his cuſtody, who alone *doth never ſleep nor ſlumber;* praying that he would guard us from all the dangers and diſturbances incident to us in that ſtate of forgetfulneſs, and *interregnum* of our reaſon; that he would grant us a happy reſurrection in ſafety and health, with a good and cheerful mind, enabling us thereafter comfortably to enjoy ourſelves, and delightfully to ſerve him.

Thus if we do conſtantly bound and circumſcribe our days, dedicating thoſe moſt remarkable breaks of time unto God's ſervice, ſince beginning and end do comprehend the whole, ſeeing, in the computation and ſtyle of Moſes, *evening and morning* do conſtitute a day; we may with ſome good congruity be ſaid to pray inceſſantly.

Eſpecially if at the middle diſtance between thoſe extremes we are wont to interpoſe ſomewhat of devotion. For as then uſually our ſpirits, being ſomewhat ſhattered and ſpent, do need a recruit, enabling us to paſs through the reſidue of the day with its incumbent buſineſs; ſo then it would do well, and may be requiſite, in a meal of

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devotion to refreſh our ſouls with ſpiritual ſuſtenance, drawn from the never-failing ſtorehouſe of divine grace; which may ſo fortify us, that with due vigour and alacrity we may perform the enſuing duties to God's honour and our own comfort. Thus to practiſe was the reſolution of Pſal. lv. 17. the Pſalmiſt, that great maſter of devotion; *Evening*, ſaid he, *and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud.* And this was the cuſtom of the noble Daniel, from which Dan. vi. 10. no occaſion could divert, no hazard could deter him: *He kneeled*, ſaith the ſtory, *upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.*

Theſe are times which it is neceſſary, or very expedient, that all men (even perſons of higheſt rank, and greateſt employment) ſhould obſerve. Theſe even of old were the practices of religious perſons, not expreſsly preſcribed by God's law, but aſſumed by themſelves; good reaſon ſuggeſting them to the firſt practiſers, and the conſenting example of pious men afterward enforcing them.

God indeed did himſelf in his Law, or by his Prophets, appoint public and ſolemn celebrations of worſhip to himſelf, in ſacrifices (involving prayer and accompanied therewith) conſtantly to be offered every morning and even- 2 Chron. ii. 4. ing: religious princes alſo did inſtitute ſervices of thankſ- 1 Chron. xvi. 40, 41. giving and praiſe to be performed at thoſe times: but there doth not appear any direct inſtitution of private xxiii. 30. Ezr. iii. 3. devotion, or its circumſtances; but the practice thereof ſeemeth originally to have been purely voluntary, managed and meaſured according to the reaſon, by the choice of each perſon; yet ſo, that the practice of eminently good men leading, and others following, it grew into a kind of common law, or ſtanding rule, (ſeeming to carry an obligation with it,) to obſerve the times ſpecified.

Beſides thoſe three times, there were farther other middle times obſerved by devout people, who had leiſure and diſpoſition of mind thereto; once between morning and noon, and once between noon and evening were ſequeſtered to that purpoſe: whence in the Acts the ninth hour of the day (that is, the middle interval between

noon and evening) is called *the hour of prayer*. Yea, SERM. VII.
ſome did impoſe on themſelves the obſervation of two other times, one between evening and midnight, the other between midnight and morn. To which practice thoſe places in the Pſalms do ſeem to allude; *My mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I may meditate on thy word.* And plainly the whole number of thoſe times, which the Pſalmiſt obſerved, is expreſſed in thoſe words: *Seven times a day will I praiſe thee, becauſe of thy righteous judgments.* Which examples whoever ſhall chooſe to follow, (in any meaſure,) he ſhall do wiſely and commendably; he ſhall certainly have no cauſe to repent; he will find it richly worth his while; great benefit and comfort will thence accrue unto him.

Acts iii. 1. Pſ. lxiii. 5, 6. Pſal. cxix. 147, 148. Pſal. cxix. 164.

If indeed Jews were ſo liberal in aſſigning, ſo punctual in affording ſuch portions of time for yielding praiſe, and offering ſupplications unto God; how much more free and ready, more careful and diligent, ſhould we be in this way of practice? we who have a religion ſo far more ſpiritual, and exempt from corporeal encumbrances; precepts ſo much more expreſs and clear; ſo much higher obligations and ſtronger encouragements to this duty; whom God in eſpecial manner ſo graciouſly doth invite, ſo powerfully doth attract unto himſelf? But farther,

VII. More eſpecially this precept may be ſuppoſed to exact from us a compliance in carefully obſerving the times of devotion ordained by public authority, or ſettled by general cuſtom. This in a popular and legal ſenſe is doing a thing indefinently, when we perform it ſo often as is required by law or cuſtom. So the Apoſtle to the Hebrews ſaith of *the prieſts*, that *they went always into the tabernacle, accompliſhing the ſervice of God: always*, that is, at all the ſolemn times appointed. And thus of the Apoſtles it is affirmed by St. Luke, that *they were continually in the temple, bleſſing and praiſing God*; that is, they conſtantly reſorted thither at the ſtated times of con-

Levit. xix. 30. xxvi. 2. Ye ſhall keep my ſabbaths, and reverence my ſanctuary. Heb. ix. 6. Luke xxiv. 53.

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courſe for prayer. This good reaſon alſo plainly doth enjoin: for that the neglecting it is not only a diſorderly behaviour in a matter of high conſequence; a criminal diſregard and diſobedience to authority; a ſcandalous contempt of our neighbours, from whoſe laudable faſhion we diſcoſt; a wrongful deſerting the public, to whoſe good, mainly promoted by the public worſhip of God, we do owe the contribution of our endeavour; but a heinous affront to Almighty God, who thereby is plainly diſhonoured, and in a manner openly diſavowed; a huge prejudice to religion, the credit and power whereof, without viſible profeſſion, exemplary compliance, mutual conſent and encouragement, cannot be upheld. Were there times by law or cuſtom defined, (as in ſome places indeed there are,) when all men ſhould be required in perſon ſolemnly to attend on their prince, for profeſſing their allegiance, or deferring any homage to him; would not thoſe, who ſhould wilfully refuſe or decline appearance, be juſtly chargeable as guilty of diſhonouring and wronging him? would not their ſuch defailance paſs for ſufficient proof, that they do not acknowledge him, that at leaſt they do not much regard or value him? So, by not joining at ſtated times in celebration of divine worſhip, we may be well conceived wholly to diſclaim God, or greatly to diſeſteem him; to ſlight religion, as a thing inſignificant and unprofitable. Do we not indeed thereby more than intimate, that we little believe God to be our ſovereign Lord and Governor; that we ſtand in no great awe or dread of him; that we are not much ſenſible of his benefits and mercies; that we repoſe ſmall truſt or hope in him; that we do not take ourſelves much to want his protection, his guidance, his aſſiſtance, his favour and mercy? Are we not in effect like to thoſe in Job, who *ſay unto God, Depart from us; for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways? What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? or what profit ſhall we have, if we pray unto him?* Thus the ſtanders-by commonly (ſome ſo as to be much offended at, others ſo as to be corrupted by our bad example) will interpret this neglect: and ſo aſſuredly God

Job xxi. 14, 15.

himſelf will take it from us, and accordingly deal with us. As he claimeth this public attendance on him for his due: (*Give*, proclaimeth he by the mouth of one of his great Heralds, *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and ſtrength: Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name: worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs:*) ſo if we to his wrong and diſgrace refuſe to yield it, we ſhall certainly find anſwerable reſentment and recompenſe from him: that as we are careleſs to ſerve him, ſo he will be unmindful to bleſs us; as we are backward to avow and glorify him, ſo he will not be forward to own and grace us; as we do ſo *deny him before men*, ſo *he will deny us before them alſo*. What other meaſure indeed can we imagine, or expect to receive? Will God, think we, be ſo partial and fond to us, ſo diſregardful and injurious toward himſelf, that he will vouchſafe to appear in favour to us, when we deign not to appear in reſpect to him? that he will openly tender our repute, when we apparently diſregard his honour? that he will employ his wiſdom, or exert his power, in our behalf, when we ſcarce will think a thought, or ſtir a ſtep, for his ſervice? Can we hope that he will freely diſpenſe proſperous ſucceſs to our enterpriſes, when we either care not or ſcorn to implore his help? that he will reach forth undeſerved bleſſings to us, when we ſubtract due praiſes from him? that he will any wiſe ſhew himſelf bountiful and merciful toward us, when we ſo palpably are injuſt and ingrateful toward him? No, *ſurely he ſcorneth the ſcorners*; and, *whoſoever deſpiſeth him, ſhall be lightly eſteemed*: ſo he expreſsly hath threatened; and ſeeing he is both infallibly true, and invincibly able, we may reaſonably preſume that he will accompliſh his word.

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Pſal. xxix. 1, 2. lxvi. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 12. Matt. x. 33. Luke ix. 26. xii. 9. Prov. iii. 34. 1 Sam. ii. 30.

VIII. Laſtly, *Praying inceſſantly* may import at large a frequency in devotion. This the words at leaſt do exact or neceſſarily imply, however expounded. For doing *inceſſantly* cannot imply leſs than doing *frequently*: in no tolerable ſenſe can we be ſaid to do that continually, which we do ſeldom: but it is an ordinary ſcheme of ſpeech to ſay that a man doth that always, w ich he is

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wont to do, and performeth often. As of the pious ſoldier Cornelius it is ſaid, that he *gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always*; and of Anna the propheteſs, that ſhe *departed not from the temple, but ſerved God with prayers and faſtings night and day*; that is, ſhe frequently reſorted to the temple, and ſerved God with an aſſiduous conſtancy. As the words may bear and do involve this ſenſe, ſo doth the reaſon of the caſe enforce it: for very juſt, very fit, very needful it is to practiſe thus. There is ever at hand abundant reaſon for, and appoſite matter of, devotion; therefore no large ſpace of time ſhould paſs without it: there be perpetually depending many cauſes thereof; whence there is not to be allowed any long vacation from it. As every moment we from God's mercy and bounty partake great favours; ſo ſhould we often render thanks and praiſe for them: for perpetually to receive courteſies, and rarely to return acknowledgments, is notorious ingratitude and iniquity. We frequently (and in a manner continually) do fall into ſins; often therefore we are obliged to confeſs ſins, we are concerned to deprecate wrath, and beg mercy; otherwiſe we muſt long crouch under the ſore burden of guilt, the ſad dread of puniſhment, the bitter pangs of remorſe, or the deſperate hazard of ſtupid obduration. Whatever we deſign or undertake, toward the good management and happy ſucceſs thereof, we (being ignorant and impotent creatures) do need the guidance, the aſſiſtance, and the bleſſing of God; ſo often therefore it is requiſite that we ſhould be ſeeking and ſueing for them: if not, we do not only tranſgreſs our duties, but fondly neglect or foully betray our own concernments. The cauſes therefore of devotion being ſo conſtant, the effects in ſome correſpondence ſhould be frequent.

Acts x. 2. Luke ii. 37.

Such frequency is indeed neceſſary for the breeding, the nouriſhment, the growth and improvement of all piety. Devotion is that holy and heavenly fire, which darteth into our minds the light of ſpiritual knowledge, which kindleth in our hearts the warmth of holy deſires: if therefore we do continue long abſent from it, a night

of darkneſs will overſpread our minds, a deadening cold- SERM. neſs will ſeize upon our affections. It is the beſt food of VII. our ſouls, which preſerveth their life and health, which repaireth their ſtrength and vigour, which rendereth them luſty and active: if we therefore long abſtain from it, we ſhall ſtarve, or pine away; we ſhall be faint and feeble in all religious performances; we ſhall have none at all, or a very languid and meagre piety.

To maintain in us a conſtant and ſteady diſpoſition to obedience, to correct our perverſe inclinations, to curb our unruly paſſions, to ſtrengthen us againſt temptations, to comfort us in anxieties and diſtreſſes, we do need continual ſupplies of grace from God; the which ordinarily are communicated in devotion, as the channel which conveyeth, or the inſtrument which helpeth to procure it, or the condition upon which it is granted. Faith, hope, love, ſpiritual comfort, and joy, all divine graces are chiefly elicited, expreſſed, exerciſed therein and thereby: it is therefore needful that it ſhould frequently be uſed; ſeeing otherwiſe we ſhall be in danger to fail in diſcharging our chief duties, and to want the beſt graces.

It is frequency of devotion alſo which maintaineth that friendſhip with God, which is the ſoul of piety. As familiar converſation (wherein men do expreſs their minds and affections mutually) breedeth acquaintance, and cheriſheth good-will of men to one another; but long-forbearance thereof diſſolveth or ſlackeneth the bonds of amity, breaking their intimacy, and cooling their kindneſs: ſo is it in reſpect to God; it is frequent converſe with him, which begetteth a particular acquaintance with him, a mindful regard of him, a hearty liking to him, a delightful taſte of his goodneſs, and conſequently a ſincere and ſolid good-will toward him; but intermiſſion thereof produceth eſtrangement or enmity toward him. If we ſeldom come at God, we ſhall little know him, not much care for him, ſcarce remember him, reſt inſenſible of his love, and regardleſs of his favour; a coldneſs, a ſhyneſs, a diſtaſte, an antipathy toward him will by degrees creep upon us. Abſtinence from his company and preſence

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will caſt us into converſations deſtructive or prejudicial to our friendſhip with him; wherein ſoon we ſhall contract familiarity and friendſhip with his enemies, (the world and the fleſh,) which are inconſiſtent with love to him, which will diſpoſe us to forget him, or to diſlike and loathe him.

It is, in fine, the frequency of devotion which alone can ſecure any practice thereof, at leaſt any practice thereof duly qualified; ſo hearty, ſo eaſy, ſo ſweet and delightful as it ſhould be. We have all a natural averſeneſs or indiſpoſition thereto, as requiring an abſtraction of thoughts and affections from ſenſible things, and a faſtening them upon objects purely ſpiritual; a rearing our heavy ſpirits above their common pitch; a ſtaying and ſettling our roving fancies; a compoſing our vain hearts in a ſober and ſteady frame, agreeable to devotion: to effect which things is a matter of no ſmall difficulty and pain; which therefore, without much uſe and exerciſe, cannot be accompliſhed; but with it, may; ſo that by frequent practice, the bent of our heart being turned, the ſtrangeneſs of the thing ceaſing, the difficulty of the work being ſurmounted, we ſhall obtain a good propenſion to the duty, and a great ſatisfaction therein.

This will render the way into God's preſence ſmooth and paſſable; removing, as all other obſtacles, ſo particularly thoſe of fear and doubt in reſpect to God, which may deter or diſcourage us from approaching to him. God being moſt holy and pure, moſt great and glorious, we, ſenſible of our corruption and vileneſs, may be fearful and ſhy of coming near unto him. But when, coming into his preſence, we do find, that *ſuch as his majeſty is, ſuch is his mercy*; when we do *taſte and ſee that the Lord is good*; when by experience we feel, that *in his preſence there is fulneſs of joy*; being *abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of his houſe*; having our ſouls there *ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs*; finding, that *a day in his courts is better than a thouſand* ſpent otherwhere; perceiving that he biddeth us welcome, that he treateth us kindly, that he ſendeth us away refreſhed with ſweeteſt comforts, and

Pſal. xxxiv. 8.
xvi. 11.
Pſal. xxxvi. 8.
lxiii. 5.
lxxxiv. 10.

rewarded with moſt excellent benefits; this will not only reconcile our hearts to devotion, but draw us into a cordial liking and earneſt deſire thereof; ſuch as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth, when he ſaith, *My ſoul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my fleſh crieth out for the living God.* This will engage us into ſtrong reſolutions of conſtantly practiſing it; ſuch as the ſame holy perſon again declareth in theſe words; *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice and my ſupplications: Becauſe he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* Hence, inſtead of a ſuſpicious eſtrangedneſs, a ſervile dread, or an hoſtile diſaffection toward God, there will ſpring up an humble confidence, a kindly reverence, a hearty love toward him; which will upon all occaſions drive us to him, hoping for his friendly ſuccour, longing after his kind embraces. So will the frequency of devotion render it facile and pleaſant. Whereas, on the contrary, diſuſe thereof will make it at any time hard and irkſome; ſtrengthening and increaſing our natural averſeneſs thereto: performing it ſeldom, we ſhall never perform it well, with that attention, that affection, that promptitude, that willingneſs and alacrity, which are due thereto. SERM. VII. Pſ. lxxxiv. 2. Pſ. cxvi. 1, 2.

According to ſo many ſenſes, in ſo many reſpects, may we, and ſhould we obſerve this precept. From thus praying continually there can be no good exception or juſt excuſe. The moſt common pleas that will be alleged for the omiſſion thereof are two; one drawn from external avocations, the other from internal indiſpoſitions obſtructing it: both of which are ſo far from being good, that being ſcanned, they will ſoon appear ſerving rather to aggravate than to excuſe or abate the neglect.

I. I cannot, ſaith one, now attend to prayers, becauſe I am not at liberty, or at leiſure, being urgently called away, and otherwiſe engaged by important affairs. How much a ſham this apology is we ſhall preſently deſcry, by aſking a few queſtions about it.

1. Do we take devotion itſelf to be no buſineſs, or a buſineſs of no conſideration? Do we conceit, when we

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pay God his debts, or diſcharge our duties toward him, when we crave his aid or mercy, when we ſolicit the main concernments of our ſoul, (yea, of our body alſo and its eſtate,) that we are idle or miſemployed; that we laviſh our time, or loſe our pains?

2. What other affairs can we have of greater moment or neceſſity than this? Can there be any obligation more indiſpenſable than is that of yielding due reſpect and ſervice to our Maker, our great Patron, our moſt liberal Benefactor? Can there be any intereſt more cloſe or weighty than this, of providing for our ſouls' eternal health and happineſs? Is not this indeed the great work, *the only neceſſary matter*, in compariſon whereto all other occupations are mere trifling, or unprofitable fiddling about nothing? What will all other buſineſs ſignify, what will come of it, if this be neglected? Buſy we may be, we may plod, we may drudge eternally; but all to no end. All our care is in effect improvidence, all our induſtry may be well reckoned idleneſs, if God be not ſerved, if our ſouls are not ſecured.

Luke x. 24. Job xxiii. 12. Αἱ τέχναι τῶν πιστῶν ἐπέργειά εἰσιν· ἔργον δὲ ἡ θεοσέβεια. *Conſt. Apoſt.* ii. 61.

3. If we ſurvey and prize all worldly buſineſſes, which among them will appear ſo importunate as to demand, ſo greedy as to devour, ſo worthy at leaſt as to deſerve all our time, that we cannot ſpare a few minutes for maintaining our moſt pleaſant intercourſe, and moſt gainful commerce with heaven? What are the great buſineſſes of the world? what but ſcraping and ſcrambling for pelf, contriving and compaſſing deſigns of ambition, courting the favour and reſpect of men, making proviſion for carnal pleaſure, gratifying fond curioſity or vain humour? And do any of theſe deſerve to be put into the ſcale againſt, ſhall all of them together be able to ſway down our ſpiritual employments? Shall theſe images, theſe ſhadows of buſineſs, ſupplant or crowd our devotion; that which procureth wealth ineſtimably precious, pleaſure infinitely ſatisfactory, honour incomparably noble above all this world can afford? If the expence of time be, as the Philoſopher ſaid, πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα, *the moſt precious expence* that can be; how can it better be laid out than

Theophr.

upon the worthieſt things, ſuch as devotion alone can afford the purchaſe and poſſeſſion of? True virtue, ſound wiſdom, a quiet conſcience, and ſteady tranquillity of mind, the love and favour of God, a title unto endleſs joy and bliſs, are purely the gifts of Heaven; and thence they will not deſcend of themſelves, but prayer muſt fetch them down. If nothing then in the world be comparable to thoſe things, how can any time be ſo well ſpent as in prayer, which acquireth them; which alſo beſt ſecureth whatever we have, and is the readieſt way to procure whatever we want? SERM. VII.

4. Should we not farther, honeſtly comparing things, eaſily diſcern, that it is no ſuch indiſpenſable buſineſs, but rather indeed ſome baſe dotage on lucre, ſome inveigling bait of pleaſure, ſome bewitching tranſport of fancy, that croſſeth our devotion? Is it not often a complimental viſit, an appointment to tattle or to tipple, a match for ſport, a wild ramble in vice or folly, that ſo deeply engageth us to put off our duty?

5. Yea, is it not commonly ſloth rather than activity, an averſeneſs from this, rather than an inclination to any other employment, which diverteth us from our prayers? Is not, I ſay, the true reaſon why we pray ſo ſeldom, not becauſe we are very buſy, but becauſe we are extremely idle; ſo idle, that we cannot willingly take the pains to unſcrew our affections from ſenſible things, to reduce our wandering thoughts, to compoſe our hearts into a right frame, to bend our untoward inclinations to a compliance with our duty? Is it not becauſe we do not feel that ſavour and ſatisfaction in theſe, which we do in other trivial and worthleſs employments, nor will be at the trouble to work ſuch diſpoſitions in our ſouls? Do we not betake ourſelves to other converſations and commerces merely for refuge, ſhunning this intercourſe with God and with ourſelves? Theſe, I fear, are oftener the real cauſes of our neglecting devotion, than any ſuch mighty avocations which we pretend.

6. But were there indeed not only a counterfeit or imaginary, but a real competition between devotion and

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other lawful buſineſs, which, in reaſon, ſhould carry it? in conſcience, which of the two ſhould be forborne or ſuſpended? Is it not evidently better, that the purſuit of our temporal intereſts, whatever they be, ſhould be a little checked, than that our affairs of everlaſting conſequence ſhould be quite laid aſide? that we ſhould venture a ſmall impairing of our eſtate, than ſurely endamage our ſouls? that we hazard to diſappoint or diſpleaſe a man, than dare to affront and offend the Almighty God?

7. Were it not ſtrangely abſurd and unhandſome to ſay, I cannot wait on God, becauſe I muſt ſpeak with a friend; I cannot go to church, although God calleth me thither, becauſe I muſt haſte to market; I cannot ſtand to pray, becauſe I am to receive money, or to make up a bargain; I cannot diſcharge my duty to God, becauſe a greater obligation than that doth lie upon me? How unconceivable an honour, how unvaluable a benefit is it, that the incomprehenſibly great and glorious Majeſty of heaven doth vouchſafe us the liberty to approach ſo near unto him, to converſe ſo freely with him, to demand and derive from his hand the ſupply of all our needs, and ſatisfaction of all our reaſonable deſires? and is it then juſt or ſeemly, by ſuch compariſons to diſparage his favour, by ſuch pretences to baffle with his goodneſs?

Put the caſe our prince ſhould call for us to ſpeak with him about matters nearly touching his ſervice and our welfare; would it be according unto duty, diſcretion, or decency, to reply, that we are at preſent buſy, and have no leiſure, and muſt therefore hold ourſelves excuſed; but that, if he will ſtay awhile, at another time, when we have leſs to do, we ſhall be perhaps diſpoſed to wait upon him? The caſe is propounded by our Lord in that parable, wherein God is repreſented as a great man, that had prepared a feaſt, and invited many gueſts thereto; but they excuſed themſelves: *One ſaid, that he had purchaſed land, and muſt needs go out to ſee it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and muſt go to prove them; an-*

Matt. xxii. 2, &c. Luke xiv. 16, &c.

other had married a wife, and therefore could not come. These indeed were affairs considerable, as this world hath any; but yet the excuses did not satisfy: for, notwithstanding, the great person was angry, and took the neglect in huge disdain.

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Ἔπειτα ὅτι σκῆψις ταῦτα καὶ πρόφασις, &c. *Chrys. in Joh. Orat.* 11.

8. Moreover, if we reflect what vast portions of time we squander away upon our petty matters, upon voluptuous enjoyments, upon fruitless pastimes, upon impertinent talk; how can we satisfy ourselves in not allotting competent time for God's service, our own salvation, and the future everlasting state? Doth not he, who, with the continuance of our life, bestoweth on us all our time, deserve that a pittance of it should be reserved for himself? Can all the world duly claim so great an allowance thereof? May not our soul (which is far our noblest part, which indeed is all ourselves) justly challenge a good share of our time to be expended on it? or shall this mortal husk engross it all? Must eternity, which comprehendeth all time, have no time belonging to it, or allotted for its concernments?

9. Again, is it not great imprudence so to lay our business, that any other matter shall thwart or thrust out devotion? Easily with a little providence may things be so ordered, that it, without interfering or justling, may well consist with all other both needful business, and convenient divertisement; so that it shall neither obstruct them, nor they extrude it: and are we not very culpable, if we do not use so much providence [a]?

10. In truth, attending upon devotion can be no obstacle, but will be great furtherance to all other good business. It is the most sure, most pleasant, most advantageous and compendious way of transacting affairs, to mix prayers and praises with them; it is the best oil that can be, to make the wheels of action go on smoothly and speedily: it not only sanctifieth our undertakings, but much promoteth and exceedingly sweeteneth the manage-

[a] Πρῶτον μὲν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἔγκλημα οὐ μικρὸν, τὸ κυκλοῦσθαι τοσούτων πραγμάτων πλήθει, καὶ τοῖς βιωτικοῖς οὕτω προσηλοῦσθαι διὰ παντὸς, ὡς μηδὲ μικρὰν εἰς τὰ πάντων ἀναγκαιότερα ἄγειν σχολήν. *Chrys. in Joh.* i. 14. (*Or.* 11.)

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ment of them. For the conſcience of having rendered unto God his due reſpect and ſervice, of having intruſted our affairs to his care, of having conſequently engaged his protection and aſſiſtance for us, will diſpoſe us to do things with a courageous alacrity and comfortable ſatisfaction; will fill us with a good hope of proſpering; will prepare us however to be ſatisfied with the event, whatever it ſhall be; will in effect procure a bleſſing and happy ſucceſs, ſuch as we may truly rejoice and triumph in, as conferred by God in favour to us. Whereas neglecting theſe duties, we can have no ſolid content or ſavoury complacence in any thing we undertake: reflecting on ſuch miſbehaviour (if we be not downright infidels, or obdurate reprobates in impiety) will quaſh or damp our courage: having thence forfeited all pretence to God's ſuccour, and provoked him to croſs us, we muſt needs ſuſpect diſappointment: as we have no reaſonable ground to hope for ſucceſs; ſo we cannot, if ſucceſs arriveth, be heartily ſatisfied therein, or take it for a bleſſing.

He therefore that is ſuch a niggard of his time, that he grudgeth to withhold any part thereof from his worldly occaſions, deeming all time caſt away that is laid out in waiting upon God, is really moſt unthrifty and prodigal thereof: by not ſparing a little, he waſteth all his time to no purpoſe; by ſo eagerly purſuing, he effectually ſetteth back his deſigns; by prepoſterouſly affecting to diſpatch his affairs, he rendereth them endleſs, or, which is the ſame, altogether unprofitable.

In fine, we may be ſure that no time is ſpent even ſo prudently and politicly, with ſo great advantage and ſo real fruit to ourſelves, as that which is employed upon devotion. In ſacrificing his time, his pains, his ſubſtance, any thing he hath or can do, to God's ſervice, no man can be a loſer.

We have alſo many examples plainly demonſtrating the conſiſtency of this practice with all other buſineſs. Who ever had more or greater affairs to manage, and who ever managed them with greater ſucceſs, than David; upon whom did lie the burden of a royal eſtate, and the care

over a moſt populous nation; the which *he fed with a faithful and true heart, and ruled prudently with all his power;* who waged great wars, vanquiſhed mighty enemies, achieved many glorious exploits, underwent many grievous troubles? Yet could not ſuch engagements diſtract or depreſs his mind from a conſtant attendance on devotion. *I will bleſs the Lord at all times; his praiſe ſhall be continually in my mouth. My mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy righteouſneſs and thy ſalvation all the day. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.* So he declareth his reſolution and his practice. Who is more preſſingly employed than was Daniel, firſt preſident over ſo vaſt a kingdom, chief miniſter of ſtate to the greateſt monarch on earth? Yet conſtantly *thrice a day did he pray and give thanks unto his God.* Who can be more entangled in varieties and intricacies of care, of pains, of trouble, than was he that preſcribeth unto us this rule of praying continually? Upon him did lie *the care of all the churches; night and day with labour and toil did he work* for the ſuſtenance of his life, *that he might not* (to the diſparagement of the Goſpel) *burden any man;* perpetually he was engaged in all ſorts of labour and travail, ever conflicting with perils, with wants, with inconveniences numberleſs: yet did he exactly conform his practice to his rule, being no leſs indefatigable and inceſſant in his devotion than he was in his buſineſs. Who ever managed a greater empire than Conſtantine? Yet *every day*, as Euſebius reporteth, *at ſtated times, ſhutting himſelf up, he alone privately did converſe with his God*[b]. The moſt pious men indeed have never been idle or careleſs men, but always moſt buſy and active, moſt induſtrious in their callings, moſt provident for their families, moſt officious toward their friends, moſt ready to ſerve their country, moſt abundant in all good works; yet have they always been moſt conſtant in devotion. So that experience clearly doth evidence, how reconcileable much devotion is to much bu-

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Pſ. lxxviii. 72. Pſ. xxxiv. 1. lxxi. 6. cxlv. 2. lxxv. 28. lxi. 4. Dan. vi. 10. 2 Cor. xi. 28. 2 Theſſ. iii. 8.

[b] Καιροῖς ἰκάστης ἡμέρας τακτοῖς ἑαυτὸν ἐγκλείων, μόνος μόνῳ τῷ αὐτῷ προσομιλῶν Θεῷ. *Euſeb. de Vita Conſt.* iv. 22.

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fineſs; and that conſequently the proſecution of the one cannot well palliate the neglect of the other.

II. No better can any man ward himſelf from blame, by imputing the neglect of devotion to ſome indiſpoſition within him thereto. For this is only to cover one fault with another, or to lay on a patch more ugly than the ſore. It is, in effect, to ſay we may ſin, becauſe we have a mind to it, or care not to do otherwiſe. Our indiſpoſition itſelf is criminal; and, as ſignifying ſomewhat habitual or ſettled, is worſe than a ſingle omiſſion: it ought therefore to be corrected and cured; and the way to do it is, by ſetting preſently upon the practice of the duty, and perſiſting reſolutely therein: otherwiſe how is it poſſible that it ſhould ever be removed? The longer we forbear it, the more ſeldom we perform it, the ſtronger ſurely will our indiſpoſition grow, and the more difficult it will be to remove it. But if (with any degree of ſerioufneſs and good intention) we come indiſpoſed to prayer, we may thereby be formed into better diſpoſition, and by continual attendance thereon, we ſhall (God's grace co-operating, which never is wanting to ſerious and honeſt intentions) grow toward a perfect fitneſs for it: prayer by degrees will become natural and delightful to us.

SERMON VIII.

OF THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

EPHES. v. 20.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God.

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THESE words, although (as the very ſyntax doth immediately diſcover) they bear a relation to, and have a fit coherence with, thoſe that precede, may yet, (eſpecially conſidering St. Paul's ſtyle and manner of expreſſion in the preceptive and exhortative part of his Epiſtles,) without any violence or prejudice on either hand, be ſevered from the context, and conſidered diſtinctly by themſelves. And (to avoid encumbrance by farther compariſon) ſo taking them we may obſerve, that every ſingle word among them carries with it ſomething of notable emphaſis and eſpecial ſignificancy. The firſt [*Giving thanks*] expreſſes the ſubſtance of a duty, to which we are exhorted. The next (I mean, in order of conſtruction) [*to God*] denotes the object or term to which it is directed. The following [*always*] determines the main circumſtance of this and all other duties, the time of performance. The laſt [*for all things*] declares the adequate matter of the duty, and how far it ſhould extend. Theſe particulars I ſhall conſider ſeverally, and in order.

Vid. Rom. xii. Eph. vi. &c.

I. Firſt then, concerning the duty itſelf, *to give thanks*, or rather, *to be thankful*; (for εὐχαριστεῖν doth not only ſignify *gratias agere, reddere, dicere*, to *give, render*, or *de-*

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clare thanks, but alſo *gratias habere, grate affectum eſſe*, to be *thankfully diſpoſed*, to entertain a grateful affection, ſenſe or memory: in which more comprehenſive notion I mean to conſider it, as including the whole duty or virtue of gratitude due to Almighty God for all his benefits, favours, and mercies;) I ſay, concerning this duty itſelf, (abſtractedly conſidered,) as it involves a reſpect to benefits or good things received; ſo in its employment about them it imports, requires, or ſuppoſes theſe following particulars.

1. It implies a right apprehenſion of, and conſequently a conſiderate attention unto, benefits conferred. For he that is either wholly ignorant of his obligations, or miſtakes them, or paſſes them over with a ſlight and ſuper-
Pſ. cvii. 43. ficial view, can nowiſe be grateful. *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the*
Pſ. lxiv. 9. *loving-kindneſs of the Lord. Men ſhall fear, and ſhall declare the work of God; for they ſhall wiſely conſider of*
Pſ. cxi. 2. *his doings. The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of*
Pſ. xxxiv. 8. *all that have pleaſure therein. O taſte* (firſt, and then) *ſee that the Lord is good.*

This is the method that great maſter of thankſgiving preſcribes; firſt experimental notice, then wiſe conſideration, then grateful ſenſe, then public acknowledgment. And thoſe we find both by him and by the Prophet Iſaias (in the very ſame words) reprehended as wickedly in-
Pſ. xxviii. 5. Iſa. v. 12. grateful perſons, who *regarded not the work of the Lord, nor conſidered the operation of his hands.* 'Tis part therefore of this duty incumbent on us, to take notice of diligently, and carefully to conſider, the divine benefits; not to let them paſs undiſcerned and unregarded by us, as perſons either wofully blind, or ſtupidly drowſy, or totally unconcerned.

'Tis a general fault, that the moſt common and frequent, the moſt obvious and conſpicuous favours of God, (like the ordinary phenomena of nature, which, as Ariſtotle obſerves, though in themſelves moſt admirable, are yet leaſt admired,) the conſtant riſing of the ſun upon us, the deſcent of fruitful ſhowers, the recourſe of temperate

ſeaſons, the continuance of our life, the enjoyment of health, the providential diſpenſation of wealth, and competent means of livelihood, the daily protection from incident dangers, the helps of improving knowledge, obtaining virtue, becoming happy, and ſuch like moſt excellent benefits, we commonly little mind or regard, and conſequently ſeldom return the thanks due for them. Poſſibly ſome rare accidents of providence, ſome extraordinary judgment, ſome miraculous deliverance, may rouſe and awaken our attention: (as it is ſaid of the Iſraelites, *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him—and remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer:*) but ſuch advertency is not the effect ſo much of gratitude, as of curioſity or of neceſſity: the notable rarity invites, or ſome powerful impulſe commands our notice. But the truly grateful induſtriouſly deſign, and are ſtudious to know throughly their obligations, that they may be able to render anſwerable returns for them.

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Pſ. lxxviii. 34, 35.

2. This duty requires a faithful retention of benefits in memory, and conſequently frequent reflections upon them. For he that is no longer affected with a benefit than it incurs the ſenſe, and ſuffers not itſelf to be diſregarded, is far from being grateful; nay, if we believe the philoſopher, is ingrateful in the worſt kind, and higheſt degree. For, *Ingratus eſt*, ſaith he, *qui beneficium accepiſſe ſe negat, quod accepit; ingratus eſt, qui diſſimulat; ingratus, qui non reddit: ingratiſſimus omnium, qui oblitus eſt. He that falſely denies the reception of a benefit, and he that diſſembles it, and he that doth not repay it, is ingrateful; but moſt ingrateful of all is he that forgets it.* It is a ſign the benefit made no deep impreſſion on his mind, ſince it left no diſcernible footſtep there; that he hardly ever thought of making recompenſe, ſince he hath ſuffered himſelf to become altogether uncapable of doing it: neither is there any hope of his amending the paſt neglect; no ſhame, no repentance, no fair occaſion can redeem him from ingratitude, in whom the very remembrance of his obligation is extinguiſhed.

Ἀχάριστος ὅστις εὖ παθὼν ἀμνημονεῖ.

Sen. iii. de Benef. cap. 1.

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If to be ſenſible of a preſent good turn deſerved the title of gratitude, all men certainly would be grateful: the Jews queſtionleſs were ſo. When Almighty God, by his wonderful power in extraordinary ways, delivered them from the tyranny and oppreſſion of their prevalent enemies; when he cauſed ſtreams to guſh forth from the bowels of a hard rock, to refreſh their thirſt; when bread deſcended from heaven in ſhowers, and the winds were winged with fleſh, to ſatisfy their greedy deſires; then ſurely they were not altogether unſenſible of the divine goodneſs; then could they acknowledge his power, and be forward enough to engage themſelves in promiſes of correſpondent obſervance toward him for the future. But the miſchief was, immediately after, as the Pſalmiſt complains, *They forgat his works, and the wonders he had ſhewed them: They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.* They *refuſed to obey, neither were mindful of the wonders that God did among them,* as Nehemiah confeſſes in their behalf. *Of the rock that begat them they were unmindful, and forgat the God that formed them,* as it is in Deuteronomy. They diſtruſted his promiſes, repined at his dealings, diſobeyed his laws, and treacherouſly apoſtatiſed from his covenant. Such were the fruits of their ingrateful forgetfulneſs; which therefore that people is ſo often charged with, and ſo ſharply reproved for by the Prophets.

Pſ. lxxviii. 11. 42.

Neh. ix. 17.

Deut. xxxii. 18.

On the contrary, we find that great pattern of gratitude, the royal Prophet David, continually revolving in his thoughts, imprinting upon his fancy, ſtudying and meditating upon, recollecting and renewing in his memory, the reſults of divine favour. *I will remember,* ſaith he, *thy wonders of old; I will mediate of all thy works, and talk of thy doings:* and, *I remember the days of old; I will meditate on all thy works; I muſe on the works of thy hands:* and, *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits:* and, *My mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, becauſe thou haſt been my help.* No place unfit, it ſeems, no time unſeaſonable for the

Thy loving-kindneſs is ever before mine eyes. Pſ. xxvi. 3. lxxvii. 11, 12. cxliii. 5. ciii. 2.

Pſ. lxiii. 5, 6, 7.

practice of this duty; not the place deſigned for reſt, not the time due to ſleep, but, as David thought, more due to a wakeful contemplation of the divine goodneſs. Whoſe vigilant gratitude we ſhould ſtrive to imitate, devoting our moſt ſolitary and retired, our moſt ſad and ſerious thoughts (not the ſtudies only of our cloſet, but the conſultations alſo of our pillow) to the preſervation of thoſe bleſſed ideas; that neither length of time may deface them in our fancy, nor other care thruſt them out thence. SERM. VIII.

It was a ſatirical anſwer, (that of Ariſtotle,) and highly opprobrious to mankind; who, being aſked, Τί τάχιστον γηράσκει; *What doth the ſooneſt grow old?* replied, Χάρις, *Thanks:* and ſo was that adagial verſe, Ἅμ' ἠλέηται, καὶ τέθνηκεν ἡ χάρις· *No ſooner the courteſy born, than the reſentment thereof dead.* Such reproachful aphoriſms we ſhould labour to confute, eſpecially as they are applicable to the divine favours, by ſo maintaining and cheriſhing our thanks for them, that they neither decay with age, nor prematurely die, nor be buried in oblivion; but may reſemble the pictures and poetical deſcriptions of the Graces, thoſe goodly daughters of heaven, ſmiling always with a never-fading ſerenity of countenance, and flouriſhing in an immortal youth.

The middle, we may obſerve, and the ſafeſt, and the faireſt, and the moſt conſpicuous places in cities are uſually deputed for the erections of ſtatues and monuments dedicated to the memory of worthy men, who have nobly deſerved of their countries. In like manner ſhould we in the heart and centre of our ſoul, in the beſt and higheſt apartments thereof, in the places moſt expoſed to ordinary obſervation, and moſt ſecure from the invaſions of worldly care, erect lively repreſentations of, and laſting memorials unto, the divine bounty; conſtantly attending to which we may be diſpoſed to gratitude. Not one bleſſing, not the leaſt favourable paſſage of providence ought to periſh with us, though long ſince paſt, and removed out of the ſphere of preſent ſenſe.

We muſt not in our old age forget who formed us in the womb, who brought us into the light, who ſuckled Pſ. lxxi. 6.

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our infancy, who educated our childhood, who governed our youth, who conducted our manhood through the manifold hazards, troubles, and diſaſters of life. Nor in our proſperity, our affluence of good things, our poſſeſſion of Canaan, ſhould we be unmindful of him who relieved us in our ſtraits, who ſupplied our wants, ſuſtained our adverſity, who redeemed us from Egypt, and led us through the wilderneſs. A ſucceſſion of new and freſh benefits ſhould not (as among ſome ſavages the manner is for the young to make away the old) ſupplant and expunge ancient ones, but make them rather more dear and venerable to us. Time ſhould not weaken or diminiſh, but rather confirm and radicate in us the remembrance of God's goodneſs; to render it, as it doth gold and wine, more precious and more ſtrong. We have uſually a memory more than enough tenacious of injuries and ill turns done to us: let it never be ſaid, to the diſgrace of that noble faculty, that we can hardly forget the diſcourteſies of man, but not eaſily remember the favours of God. But farther,

Deut. vi. 12. viii. 11.

3. This duty implies a due eſteem and valuation of benefits; that the nature and quality, the meaſure and quantity, the circumſtances and conſequences of them be well expended; elſe the gratitude is like to be none, or very defective. For we commenſurate our thankfulneſs, not ſo much to the intrinſic excellency of things, as to our peculiar eſtimations of them. A cynic perhaps would not return more thanks for a diamond, than for a pebble; nor more gratefully receive a talent of gold, than an ounce of copper; becauſe he equally values, or rather alike contemns both.

Wherefore we find our (never-to-be-forgotten) example, the devout thankſgiver, David, continually declaring the great price he ſet upon the divine favours; admiring and diſplaying their tranſcendent perfections, their wonderful greatneſs, their boundleſs extenſion, their exceſſive multitude, their endleſs duration, their advantageous circumſtances, (the excellent needfulneſs, convenience, and ſeaſonableneſs of them; together with the

admirable freeneſs, wiſdom, and power of the Benefactor, SERM. ſhining forth in and by them.) *I will praiſe thee, O Lord,* VIII. ſaith he, *among the people, I will ſing unto thee among the* Pſ. cviii. 3, *nations: for thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy* 4. *faithfulneſs reacheth unto the clouds.* And, *Remember the* Pſ. cv. 5. 7. *marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth. He is the Lord our God, his judgments are in all the earth.* And again, *Thy mercy,* Pſ. xxxvi. *O Lord, is in the heavens, thy faithfulneſs reacheth unto* 5, 6, 7. *the clouds. Thy righteouſneſs is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preſerveſt man and beaſt. How excellent is thy loving-kindneſs, O* Pſ. cxxxix. *God!* and, *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O* 17, 18. *Lord! O how great is the ſum of them! If I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the ſand.* And again, Pſ. cxi. 3. *His work is honourable and glorious, his righteouſneſs en-* cxlv. 9. *dureth for ever:* and, *The Lord is good to all, and his* Pſ. lxviii. *tender mercies are over all his works:* and, *Bleſſed be the* 19. *Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits.*

In ſuch manner ought we diligently to ſurvey and judiciouſly to eſtimate the effects of divine beneficence, examining every part, and deſcanting upon every circumſtance thereof: like thoſe that contemplate ſome rare beauty, or ſome excellent picture; ſome commending the exact proportions, ſome the graceful features, ſome the lively colours diſcernible therein. There is not the leaſt of the divine favours, which, if we conſider the condeſcenſive tenderneſs, the clear intention, the undeſerved frankneſs, the cheerful debonairity expreſſed therein, hath not dimenſions larger than our comprehenſion, colours too fair, and lineaments too comely for our weak ſight thoroughly to diſcern; requiring therefore our higheſt eſteem and our utmoſt thanks.

'Tis perhaps ſomewhat dangerous to affix a determinate value upon any of God's benefits: (for to value them ſeems to undervalue them, they being really ineſtimable:) what then is it to extenuate, to vilify, to deſpiſe the greateſt? We ſhould eſteem them, as we meaſure the heavens with our eye, as we compute the ſands upon the ſhore, as

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we would prize inexhauſtible mines of gold, and treaſures of pearl; that is, by confeſſing heartily their worth ſurpaſſes the ſtrength of our imagination to conceive, and of our ſpeech to utter; that they are immenſe, innumerable, unconceivable, and unexpreſſible. But ſtill,

4. *Giving thanks* imports, that benefits be received with a willing mind, a hearty ſenſe, a vehement affection. The forementioned particulars are indeed neceſſary properties, inſeparable concomitants, or prerequiſite conditions to: but a cheerful and cordial acceptance of benefits is the form, as it were, and ſoul, the life and ſpirit, the principal and moſt eſſential ingredient of this duty.

It was not altogether unreaſonable, though it went for a paradox, that dictate of the Stoics, that *animus ſufficit animo*, and, that *qui libenter accepit, beneficium reddidit*: that he, who with a willing and well-affected mind receives a courteſy, hath fully diſcharged the duty of gratitude; that other endeavours of return and compenſation are rather handſome acceſſions to it, than indiſpenſably requiſite to the completion thereof. For as in the collation, it is not the gold or the ſilver, the food or the apparel, in which the benefit conſiſts, but the will and benevolent intention of him that beſtows them; ſo reciprocally it is the good acceptance, the ſenſibleneſs of, and acquieſcence in the benefactor's goodneſs, that conſtitutes the gratitude; which who affords, though he be never capable of yielding other ſatisfaction, *voluntate voluntati ſatisfecit*; and, *regum æquavit opes animo*——. It is ingenuity that conſtitutes (reſpectively) both a bountiful giver and a thankful receiver. A truly noble benefactor purely aimeth at not any material reward, or advantage to himſelf; (it were trading this, not beneficence;) but the good profit and content of him, to whom he diſpenſeth his favour: of which being aſſured, he reſts ſatisfied, and accounts himſelf royally recompenſed[a].

[a] Quoties quod propoſuit quis conſequitur, capit operis ſui fructum. Qui beneficium dat, quid proponit ſibi? prodeſſe ei cui dat, et ſibi voluptati eſſe:

Such a benefactor is Almighty God, and ſuch a tribute he requires of us; a ready embracement of, and a joyful complacency in his kindneſs; even ſuch as he expreſſed, who ſaid, *Becauſe thy loving-kindneſs is better than life, my lips ſhall praiſe thee:* and, *My ſoul ſhall be filled as with marrow and fatneſs, and my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips:* and, *I will praiſe thee with my whole heart; I will be glad and rejoice in thee:* and, *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me, praiſe his holy name.* SERM. VIII. Pſ. lxiii. 3. civ. 33. lxxi. 22. lxiii. 5. ix. 1, 2. Pſ. ciii. 1.

No holocauſt is ſo acceptable to God, as a heart enflamed with the ſenſe of his goodneſs. He loves not only ἱλαρὸν δότην, (*a merry giver,*) but ἱλαρὸν δέκτην (*a cheerful receiver*) alſo. He would have us, as to deſire his favour with a greedy appetite, ſo to taſte it with a ſavoury reliſh. He deſigns not only to *fill* our mouths with *food,* but *our hearts* alſo *with gladneſs.* 2 Cor. ix. 7. Acts xiv. 17.

We muſt not ſeem to grudge or repine, to murmur or diſdain, that we are neceſſitated to be beholden to him; leſt it happen to us as it did to them of whom it is ſaid, *While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of them.* Yea, 'tis our duty not to be contented only, but to be delighted, to be tranſported, to be raviſhed with the emanations of his love: to entertain them with ſuch a diſpoſition of mind, as the dry and parched ground imbibes the ſoft dew and gentle ſhowers; as the chill and darkſome air admits the benign influences of heavenly light; as the thirſty ſoul takes in the ſweet and cooling ſtream. He that with a ſullen look, a dead heart, a faint ſenſe, a cold hand, embraces the gifts of heaven, is really unthankful, though with deluges of wine and oil he makes the altars to overflow, and clouds the ſky with the ſteam of his ſacrifices. But yet farther, Pſ. lxxviii. 30, 31.

5. This duty requires due acknowledgment of our ob-

non ſibi invicem reddi voluit; aut non fuit beneficium, ſed negotiatio. Beneficii proprium eſt, nihil de reditu cogitare. *Senec.*

Nec eſt dubium quin is qui liberalis benignuſque dicitur, officium, non fructum, ſequatur. *Cic. de Leg.* i.

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ligation, ſignifications of our notice, declarations of our eſteem and good acceptance of favours conferred. It is the worſt and moſt deteſtable of ingratitudes, that which proceeds from pride and ſcorn: and ſuch is he guilty of, who is either unwilling or aſhamed to confeſs himſelf obliged; who purpoſely diſſembles a benefit, or diſavows the benefactor; who refuſes to render thoſe moſt manifeſtly due, and moſt [b] eaſily diſcharged, thoſe neither toilſome nor expenſive oblations of praiſe and acknowledgment. This part of our duty requires, that we offer to God, not coſtly hecatombs, but the *calves* only *of our lips,* (as the prophet Hoſea ſpeaks;) not the fruit of our lands, but καρπὸν χειλέων only, (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews ſtyles it,) *the fruit of our lips, confeſſing to his name;* that we employ ſome few blaſts of the breath he gave us on the celebration of his goodneſs, and advancement of his repute. *I will praiſe the name of God with a ſong, and will magnify him with thankſgiving. This ſhall pleaſe the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs,* ſaith David.

Hoſ. xiv. 2.

Heb. xiii. 15. ὁμολογόντων.

Pſ. lxix. 30, 31.

And ſurely it is the leaſt homage we in gratitude owe, and can pay to Almighty God, to avow our dependance upon an obligation to him for the good things we enjoy, to acknowledge that his favours do deſerve thanks, to publiſh to the world our experience of his goodneſs, to proclaim ſolemnly with the voice of thankſgiving his moſt deſerved praiſe; reſembling him who abounds in ſuch expreſſions as theſe: *I will ſing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my mouth will I make known his faithfulneſs to all generations. I will publiſh with the voice of thankſgiving, and tell of all his wondrous works. I will ſpeak of the glorious honour of thy majeſty, and of thy wondrous works. I have not hid thy righteouſneſs in my heart, I have declared thy faithfulneſs and thy ſalvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindneſs and thy truth from the great congregation.*

Pſ. lxxxix. 1. xxvi. 7. cxlv. 5. xl. 10. Vid. Pſ. lxvi. 5. O come hither, and behold the works of God, &c.

[b] Οὐδὲ γὰρ βαρύ τι καὶ ἰσαχθὲς ἐπιζητεῖ παρ' ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ ὁμολογεῖν μόνον τὰς τοσαύτας εὐεργεσίας, καὶ τὰς ὑπὲρ τούτων αὐτῷ εὐχαριστίας ἀναφέειν. *Chryſ.* tom. i. pag. 54.

Thus if a grateful affection live in our hearts, it will reſpire through our mouths, and diſcover itſelf in the motion of our lips. There will be a conſpiracy and faithful correſpondence between our mind and our tongue: if the one be ſenſible, the other will not be ſilent; as if the ſpring works, the wheels will turn about, and the bell not fail to ſpeak. Neither ſhall we content ourſelves in loneſome tunes, and private ſoliloquies, to whiſper out the divine praiſes; but ſhall loudly excite and provoke others to a melodious conſonance with us. We ſhall, with the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael, cite and invoke heaven and earth; the celeſtial choir of angels; the ſeveral eſtates and generations of men, the numberleſs company of all the creatures, to aſſiſt and join in concert with us, in celebrating the worthy deeds, and magnifying the glorious name of our moſt mighty Creator, of our moſt bountiful Benefactor. SERM. VIII.

Gratitude is of a fruitful and diffuſive nature, of a free and communicative diſpoſition, of an open and ſociable temper: it will be imparting, diſcovering, and propagating itſelf: it affects light, company, and liberty; it cannot endure to be ſmothered in privacy and obſcurity. Its beſt inſtrument therefore is ſpeech, that moſt natural, proper, and eaſy mean of converſation, of ſignifying our conceptions, of conveying, and as it were transfunding our thoughts and paſſions into each other[c]. This therefore *glory of ours*, and beſt *organ* that we have, (as the Pſalmiſt ſeems to call it,) our tongue, we ſhould in all reaſon devote to the honour, and conſecrate to the praiſe of him who made it, and who conſerves it ſtill in tune. Pſ. lvii. 8.

And, the farther to provoke us, we may conſider, that it hath been the manner prompted by nature, and authorized by general practice, for men of all nations, and all times, and all ways, by compoſed hymns and panegyrical elogies, to expreſs their gratitude for the gifts of nature, and for the benefits indulged by Providence; in

[c] Ψυχὴ γάρ, οἶμαι, ψυχῇ καὶ πνεῦμα πνεύματι συναπτόμενα κατὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου σχέσιν, &c. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* i. p. 270.

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their public ſacrifices and ſolemn feſtivities extolling the excellent qualities of their imaginary deities, and reciting the famous achievements of their heroes and ſuppoſed benefactors: to whoſe favourable help and bleſſing, in their conceit, they owed the fruits of the earth, the comforts of life, the defence and patronage of their countries: being indeed miſtaken in the object, but not tranſgreſſing in the ſubſtance of the duty; paying a due debt, though to falſe creditors. And I wiſh we were as ready to imitate them in the one, as we are, perhaps, prone to blame them for the other. For, certainly, acknowledgments of the divine goodneſs, and ſolemn teſtifications of our thankful ſenſe thereof, (whatever the abuſed world may now imagine,) was always, is now, and ever will be the principal and moſt noble part of all religion immediately addreſſed to God. But moreover,

6. This duty requires endeavours of real compenſation, and a ſatisfactory requital of benefits, according to the ability and opportunity of the receiver: that we do not only verbally *dicere*, and *agnoſcere;* but really *agere*, and *referre gratias:* that to him, who hath by his beneficence obliged us, we miniſter reciprocal aſſiſtance, comfort, and relief, if he need them, and be capable to receive them; however, by evident teſtimonies to diſcover our ready diſpoſition to make ſuch real returns; and withal, to ſuit our actions to his good liking, and in our carriage to comply with his reaſonable deſires. For, *as the earth which drinketh the rain often coming upon it, and* having been by great labour tilled, and manured with expence, *yieldeth* yet no *meet herbage*, or *fruit agreeable to the expectation of him that dreſſeth it*, but is either wholly barren, or *produceth* only *thorns and briars, is* (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews tells us) *to be reprobated, and nigh unto curſing*; that is, deſerves no farther care or culture to be employed on it, and is to be reputed deſperately worthleſs: ſo is he, (that we may apply an *epodoſis* to the Apoſtle's compariſon,) who, daily partaking the influences of divine providence and bounty, affords no anſwerable return, to be accounted execrably unthankful,

1 Sam. xii. 24. Only fear the Lord, and ſerve him in truth, with all your heart: for conſider how great things he hath done for you.

Heb. vi. 7, 8.

εὔθετον βοτάνην.

and unworthy of any farther favour to be ſhewed toward him. SERM. VIII.

'Tis true, our *righteouſneſs* (or *beneficence*, ſo the word there ſignifies) *doth not extend unto God:* his benefits exceed all poſſibility of any proportionable requital: he doth not need, nor can ever immediately receive any advantage from us: we cannot enrich him with our gifts, who by unqueſtionable right, and in unalterable poſſeſſion, is Lord and Maſter of all things that do actually or can poſſibly exiſt; nor advance him by our weak commendations, who already enjoyeth the ſupreme pitch of glory; nor any way contribute to his in itſelf complete and indefectible beatitude. Yet we may by appoſite ſignifications declare our willingneſs to ſerve and exalt him: we may by our obſequious demeanour highly pleaſe and content him; we may, by our charity and benignity to thoſe whoſe good he tenders, yield (though not an adequate, yet) an acceptable return to his benefits. *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* ſaith David, in way of counſel and deliberation: and thereupon reſolves, *I will take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord: I will pay my vows unto the Lord.* Seaſonable benedictions, officious addreſſes, and faithful performances of vows, he intimates to bear ſome ſhadow at leaſt, ſome reſemblance of compenſation. And ſo did his wife ſon likewiſe, when he thus adviſed, *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, and with the firſt-fruits of thy increaſe.*

Pſ. xvi. 2.

Pſ. cxvi. 12.

Ver. 13, 14.

Prov. iii. 9.

Almighty God, though he really doth, and cannot otherwiſe do, yet will not ſeem to beſtow his favours altogether *gratis*, but to expect ſome competent return, ſome ſmall uſe and income from them. He will aſſert his rightful title, and be acknowledged the chief proprietary, by ſignal expreſſions of our fealty, and the payment of ſome though inconſiderable quit-rent, for our poſſeſſions derived from him: he will rather himſelf be ſeemingly indigent, than permit us to be really ingrateful. For knowing well that our performance of duty and reſpect toward him greatly conduceth to our comfort and hap-

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pineſs[e], he requireth of us ſuch demonſtrations of them, as we conveniently are able to exhibit; he appoints ſervices expreſſive of thankfulneſs, exacts tributes and cuſtoms, demands loans and benevolences, encourages and accepts free-will offerings from us. *Thou ſhalt not appear empty before the Lord,* was a ſtatute to the Jews, qualified and moderated by certain meaſures: the firſt-fruits of their lands, the firſt-born of their cattle and of themſelves, the tenths of their annual increaſe, and a certain allotment from the ſpoils acquired in wars, did God challenge to himſelf, as fitting recompenſes due for his bounty to and care over them.

Exod. xxiii. 15.

Neither did the Gentiles conceive themſelves exempted from the like obligation. For the ἀκροθίνια, the *top* or *chief of their corn heaps,* they were wont to conſecrate unto him who had bleſſed their fields with increaſe; and the ἀκρόλεια, *the firſt and beſt of the prey,* they dedicated to the adornment of his temple by whoſe favourable diſpoſal they had obtained the victory. Neither would they ſooner begin their meal, and partake of their neceſſary refreſhment, than, by pouring forth their gratulatory libation, they had performed ſome homage to heaven for it.

Hom. Il. H. ad finem.

———οὐδέ τις ἔτλη
Πρὶν πιέειν, πρὶν λεῖψαι ὑπερμενέϊ Κρονίωνι,

was the cuſtom, it ſeems, in Homer's time. I ſhall not inſiſt upon their ἀναθήματα, their anniverſary or their caſual ſacrifices; but only obſerve, (what, if ſeaſonable, might by many ſufficient teſtimonies be evinced,) that thoſe men (at leaſt the moſt intelligent of them) were not ſo ſenſeleſs as to imagine, that the gods, to whom they performed thoſe ſervices, and devoted thoſe oblations, did any wiſe need, or were truly benefited by them; but that they eſteemed it a comely thing, by the moſt ſignificant means they could invent, to declare their grateful ſenſe of the divine goodneſs and indulgence toward them.

Vid. *Platonis Alcib.* ii. Οὐ γὰρ, οἶμαι, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τὸ τῶν θεῶν, ὥστε ὑπὸ δώρων παράγεσθαι, οἷον κακὸν τοκιστὴν, &c.

[e] Ἀκήρατος γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἀνενδεὴς οὖσα, οὐδενὸς ἑτέρου προσδεῖται· οἱ δὲ αἰνοῦντες αὐτὸν, αὐτοὶ λαμπρότεροι γίνονται. *S. Chryſ. in Pſ.* cxliv. p. 885. *Savil.*

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And though we are, perhaps, diſobliged now from the circumſtantial manner, yet are we no wiſe freed from (but rather more ſtrongly engaged to) the ſubſtantial performance of this ſort of gratitude. We are to offer ſtill, not dead *bulls and goats*, but, as St. Paul ſaith, *our own bodies, living ſacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.* We are excuſed from material, but are yet bound to yield πνευματικὰς θυσίας, *ſpiritual ſacrifices* unto God, as St. Peter tells us. We muſt burn incenſe ſtill, that of fervent devotion; and ſend up continually to heaven θυσίαν τῆς αἰνέσεως, that *thank-offering of praiſe*, which the Apoſtle to the Hebrews mentions. We muſt conſecrate the firſt-born of our ſouls, (pure and holy thoughts,) and the firſt-fruits of our ſtrength, (our moſt active endeavours,) to God's ſervice. We muſt ſlay our impure deſires, mortify our corrupt affections, and abandon our ſelfiſh reſpects for his ſake. We muſt give him our hearts, and preſent our wills entirely to his diſpoſal. We muſt vow to him, and pay the daily oblation of ſincere obedience. We muſt officiouſly attend his pleaſure, and labour to content him by an innocent and unblemiſhed converſation. With theſe things Almighty God is effectually gratified; he approves of and accepts theſe, as real teſtimonies of our thankfulneſs, and competent returns of his benefits.

Rom. xii. 1.

1 Pet. ii. 5.

Heb. xiii. 15.

Μία ἀμωβὴ κυριωτάτη παρὰ ἀνθρώπων, ταῦτα δρῶν ἅπερ ἀρετὰ τῷ Θεῷ. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* vii. p. 511.

Eſpecially our charity and beneficence, our exhibiting love and reſpect to good men, (his faithful ſervants and near relations,) our affording help and ſuccour to perſons in need and diſtreſs, he accounts a ſuitable retaliation of his kindneſs, acknowledges to be an obligation laid upon himſelf, and hath by ſettled rules and indiſpenſable promiſes obliged himſelf to requite them. For, *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, he will pay him again:* and, *God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed toward his name, in that ye have miniſtered to the ſaints, and do miniſter:* and, *To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed:* and, *I deſire fruit*, ſaith St. Paul to the Philip-

Prov. xix. 17.

Heb. vi. 10.

Heb. xiii. 16.

Phil. iv. 17, 18.

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pians, *that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were ſent from you, an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well pleaſing to God.* And,

Matt. xxv. 40. *Inaſmuch as ye have done it to* (that is, fed, and clothed, and comforted) *the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me,* ſaith our Saviour; manifeſtly declaring, that the good we do, and the reſpect we ſhew unto good and needy men, God reckons it done unto himſelf.

And this point I ſhall conclude with the ſayings of the wiſe Hebrew philoſopher Ben-Sirach, *He that keepeth the law, bringeth offerings enough: He that taketh heed to the commandment, offereth a peace-offering. He that requiteth a good turn, offereth fine flower: and he that giveth alms, ſacrificeth praiſe. To depart from wickedneſs is a thing pleaſing to the Lord: and to forſake unrighteouſneſs, is a propitiation.* To theſe I ſhall only add this one particular;

Ecclus. xxxv. 1, 2, 3.

7. That true gratitude for benefits is always attended with the eſteem, veneration, and love of the benefactor. Beneficence is a royal and godlike thing, an argument of eminent goodneſs and power conſpiring; and neceſſarily therefore, as in them that perceive and duly conſider it, it begets reſpect and reverence; ſo peculiarly in thoſe that feel its benign influence, it produces love and affection: like the heavenly light, which to all that behold it appears glorious; but more powerfully warms thoſe that are directly ſubject to its rays, and is by them more vigorouſly reflected.

And as to thoſe that are immediately concerned therein, it imports more particular regard and good-will; ſo, if they be duly ſenſible thereof, it engages them in mutual correſpondence to an extraordinary eſteem and benevolence: ſuch as David upon this account profeſſes to have been in himſelf toward God, and frequently excites others to. *I will love thee, O Lord my ſtrength. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praiſed. The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my rock; and let the God of my ſalvation be*

Pſ. xviii. 1. 3. 46.

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exalted. I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice and my ſupplications. And, (in the Goſpel,) *Becauſe her ſins, being many, were forgiven, therefore ſhe loved much.* So true it is, that ſenſe of favour indulged is naturally productive of love.

Pſ. cxvi. 1. Luke vii. 47. Ἔστιν χάρις γὰρ τὴν χάριν τίκτουσα. *Soph.*

Thus have I plainly and ſimply preſented you with what my meditations ſuggeſted concerning the nature and ſubſtance of this duty, with the ſeveral branches ſprouting from the main ſtock thereof: I proceed now to that which will exceedingly enlarge the worth, and engage to the performance thereof.

II. The object and term to which it is to be directed; we are to give thanks *to God. To God,* I ſay; that is, *to him,* unto whom we are obliged, not for ſome ſmall and inconſiderable trifles, but for the moſt weighty and valuable benefits: from whom we receive, not few or ſome, but all good things; whatever is neceſſary for our ſuſtenance, convenient for our uſe, pleaſant for our enjoyment; not only thoſe that come immediately from his hand, but what we obtain from others, who from him receive both the will and the power, the means and the opportunities of doing us good: to whom we owe, not only what we ever did or do at preſent poſſeſs, or can hereafter hope for of good; but that we were, are, or ſhall ever be in capacity to receive any: to the author, upholder, and preſerver of our being; without whoſe goodneſs we had never been, and without whoſe care we cannot ſubſiſt one moment.

To him who is the Lord and true owner of all things we partake of; whoſe air we breathe, whoſe ground we tread on, whoſe food ſuſtains us; whoſe wholly we are ourſelves, both the bodies we carry about us, (which is *the work of his hands,*) and the ſoul we think with, which was breathed from his mouth.

To him who hath created a whole world to ſerve us, a ſpacious, a beautiful, a ſtately world for us to inhabit and to diſport in; who hath ſubjected ſo fair a territory to our dominion, and conſigned to our uſe ſo numerous a

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progeny of goodly creatures, to be managed, to be governed, to be enjoyed by us.

So that wherever we direct our eyes, whether we reflect them inward upon ourſelves, we behold his goodneſs to occupy and penetrate the very root and centre of our beings; or extend them abroad toward the things about us, we may perceive ourſelves incloſed wholly, and ſurrounded with his benefits. At home we find a comely body framed by his curious artifice, various organs fitly proportioned, ſituated, and tempered for ſtrength, ornament, and motion, actuated by a gentle heat, and invigorated with lively ſpirits, diſpoſed to health, and qualified for a long endurance; ſubſervient to a ſoul endued with divers ſenſes, faculties, and powers, apt to inquire after, purſue, and perceive various delights and contents. To the ſatisfaction of which all extrinſical things do miniſter matter and help; by his kind diſpoſal, who furniſhes our palates with variety of delicious fare, entertains our eyes with pleaſant ſpectacles, raviſhes our ears with harmonious ſounds, perfumes our noſtrils with fragrant odours, cheers our ſpirits with comfortable gales, *fills our hearts with food and gladneſs*, ſupplies our manifold needs, and protects us from innumerable dangers.

To him who hath inſpired us with immortal minds, and impreſſed upon them perſpicuous characters of his own divine eſſence; hath made us, not in ſome ſuperficial lineaments, but in our moſt intimate conſtitution, to reſemble himſelf, and to partake of his moſt excellent perfections; an extenſive knowledge of truth, a vehement complacency in good, a forward capacity of being completely happy, (according to our degree and within our ſphere.) To which bleſſed end by all ſuitable means (of external miniſtry and interior aſſiſtance) he faithfully conducts us; revealing to us the way, urging us in our proceſs, reclaiming us when we deviate; engaging us by his commands, ſoliciting us by gentle advices, encouraging us by gracious promiſes; inſtructing us by his holy word, and admoniſhing us by his loving ſpirit.

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To him who vouchſafes to grant us a free acceſs unto, a conſtant intercourſe and a familiar acquaintance with himſelf; to eſteem and ſtyle us his *friends* and *children*; to invite us frequently, and entertain us kindly with thoſe moſt pleaſant delicacies of ſpiritual repaſt; yea, to viſit us often at our home, and (if we admit) to abide and dwell with us; indulging us the enjoyment of that preſence, wherein the life of all joy and comfort conſiſts, and to behold the light of his all-cheering countenance.

Is there any thing more? Yes: *To him* who, to redeem us from miſery, and to advance our eſtate, hath infinitely debaſed himſelf, and eclipſed the brightneſs of his glorious majeſty; not diſdaining to aſſume us into a near affinity, yea, into a perfect union with himſelf; to inhabit our frail and mortal nature, to undergo the laws and conditions of humanity, to appear in our ſhape, and converſe, as it were, upon equal terms with us, and at laſt to taſte the bitter cup of a moſt painful and diſgraceful death for us.

Yea, *to him* who not only deſcended from his imperial throne, became a ſubject, and (which is more) a ſervant for our ſake; but deſigned thereby to exalt us to a participation of his royal dignity, his divine nature, his eternal glory and bliſs; ſubmitting crowns and ſceptres to our choice; crowns that cannot fade, and ſceptres that can never be extorted from us.

Farther yet, *To him*, the excellent quality, the noble end, the moſt obliging manner of whoſe beneficence doth ſurpaſs the matter thereof, and hugely augment the benefits: who, not compelled by any neceſſity, not obliged by any law, (or previous compact,) not induced by any extrinſic arguments, not inclined by our merits, not wearied with our importunities, not inſtigated by troubleſome paſſions of pity, ſhame, or fear, (as we are wont to be,) not flattered with promiſes of recompenſe, nor bribed with expectation of emolument, thence to accrue unto himſelf; but being abſolute maſter of his own actions, only both lawgiver and counſellor to himſelf, all-ſufficient, and incapable of admitting any acceſſion to his perfect bliſsful-

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neſs; moſt willingly and freely, out of pure bounty and good-will, is our Friend and Benefactor; preventing not only our deſires, but our knowledge; ſurpaſſing not our deſerts only, but our wiſhes, yea, even our conceits, in the diſpenſation of his ineſtimable and unrequitable benefits; having no other drift in the collation of them, beſide our real good and welfare, our profit and advantage, our pleaſure and content.

To him who not lately began, or ſuddenly will ceaſe, that is either uncertain or mutable in his intentions, but from everlaſting deſigned, continues daily, and will (if we ſuffer him) to all eternity perſevere unmoveable in his reſolutions to do us good.

To him whom no ingratitude, no undutiful carriage, no rebellious diſobedience of ours, could for one minute wholly remove, or divert from his ſteady purpoſe of caring for us: who regards us, though we do not attend to him; procures our welfare, though we neglect his concernments; employs his reſtleſs thought, extends his watchful eye, exerts his powerful arm, is always mindful, and always buſy to do us good; watching over us when we ſleep, and remembering us when we forget ourſelves: in whom yet 'tis infinite condeſcenſion to think of us, who are placed ſo far beneath his thoughts; to value us, who are but duſt and dirt; not to deſpiſe and hate us, who are really ſo deſpicable and unworthy. For *though he dwelleth on high*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt truly and emphatically, *he humbleth himſelf to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth.*

Pſ. cxiii. 5, 6.

To him that is as merciful and gracious, as liberal and munificent toward us; that not only beſtows on us more gifts, but pardons us more debts, forgives us more ſins, than we live minutes; that with infinite patience endures, not only our manifold infirmities and imperfections, but our petulant follies, our obſtinate perverſeneſſes, our treacherous infidelities; overlooks our careleſs neglects and our wilful miſcarriages; puts up the exceedingly many outrageous affronts, injuries, and contumelies continually offered to his ſupreme Majeſty by us baſe

worms, whom he hath always under his feet, and can crush to nothing at his pleaſure. SERM VIII.

To him yet, who, as St. James ſaith, *giveth freely, and upbraideth no man;* who calls us neither very frequently nor over ſtrictly to accounts; who exacts of us no impoſſible, no very difficult, no greatly-burdenſome or coſtly returns; being ſatisfied with the cheerful acceptance of his favours, the hearty acknowledgments of his goodneſs, the ſincere performance of ſuch duties, to which our own welfare, comfort, and advantage (rightly apprehended) would otherwiſe abundantly diſpoſe us. Jam. i. 5.

To him, laſtly, whoſe benefits to acknowledge is the greateſt benefit of all; to be enabled to thank whom deſerves our greateſt thanks; to be ſenſible of whoſe beneficence, to meditate on whoſe goodneſs, to admire whoſe excellency, to celebrate whoſe praiſe, is heaven itſelf and paradiſe, the life of angels, the quinteſſence of joy, the ſupreme degree of felicity.

In a word, *To him* whoſe benefits are immenſely great, innumerably many, unexpreſſibly good and precious. For, *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can ſhew forth all his praiſe?* ſaid he, who had employed often his moſt active thoughts and his utmoſt endeavours thereupon, and was incomparably better able to do it. Pſ. cvi. 2.

To this God, to this great, to this only Benefactor of ours, we owe this moſt natural and eaſy, this moſt juſt and equal, this moſt ſweet and pleaſant duty of giving thanks. To whom if we wilfully refuſe, if we careleſsly neglect to pay it, I ſhall only ſay thus much, that we are not only monſtrouſly ingrateful, and horribly wicked; but abominably fooliſh, and deplorably miſerable. I ſhall repeat this ſentence once again, and wiſh it may have its due effect upon us: To this great, to this only Patron and Benefactor of ours, if we do not in ſome meaſure diſcharge our due debt of gratitude for his ineſtimable benefits and mercies, we are to be adjudged not only moſt prodigiouſly unthankful, moſt deteſtably impious, but moſt wofully ſtupid alſo and ſenſeleſs, moſt deſperately wretched and unhappy.

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I ſhould now proceed to conſider the circumſtance of time determined in the word *always;* and the extenſion of the matter, implied in thoſe words, *for all things:* and then to ſubjoin ſome farther inducements or arguments perſuaſive to the practice of this duty. But the time (and, I fear, your patience) failing, I ſhall reſerve them to ſome other opportunity.

SERMON IX.

OF THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

EPHES. V. 20.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God.

HAVING formerly diſcourſed upon theſe words, I obſerved in them four particulars conſiderable: 1. The ſubſtance of a duty, to which we are exhorted, to *give thanks*; 2. The term unto which it is directed, *to God*; 3. The circumſtance of time determined in that word *always*; 4. The extent of the matter about which the duty is employed, *for all things*. Concerning the two former particulars, wherein the duty conſiſted, and wherefore eſpecially related unto God, I then repreſented what did occur to my meditation. SERM. IX.

III. I proceed now to the third, the circumſtance of time allotted to the performance of this duty, expreſſed by that univerſal and unlimited term, *always*.

Which yet is not ſo to be underſtood, as if thereby we were obliged in every inſtant (or ſingular point of time) actually to remember, to conſider, to be affected with, and to acknowledge the divine benefits: for the deliberate operations of our minds being ſometimes wholly interrupted by ſleep, otherwhile preoccupied by the indiſpenſable care of ſerving our natural neceſſities, and with attendance upon other reaſonable employments, it were impoſſible to comply with an obligation to the per-

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formance of this duty ſo interpreted. And thoſe maxims of law, *Impoſſibilium nulla eſt obligatio*, and, *Quæ rerum natura prohibentur, nulla lege confirmata ſunt*, (that is, *No law or precept can oblige to impoſſibilities*,) being evidently grounded upon natural equity, ſeem yet more valid in relation to his laws, who is the Judge of all the world, and in his diſpenſations moſt tranſcendently juſt and equal.

We may therefore obſerve, that the Hebrews are wont (in way of ſynecdoche, or grammatical hyperbole) ſo to uſe words of this kind, that their univerſal importance ought to be reſtrained by the quality or circumſtances of the matter about which they converſe. As when our Saviour ſaith, *Ye ſhall be hated of all men for my ſake; all* is not to be taken for every ſingular perſon, (ſince there were ſome that loved our Saviour, and embraced the evangelical doctrine,) but for many, or the moſt. And when David ſaith, *There is none that doeth good;* he ſeemeth only to mean, that in the general corruption of his times there were few righteous perſons to be found. And ſo *for ever* is often uſed, not for a perpetual and endleſs, but for a long and laſting duration; and *always*, not for a continual, unintermitted ſtate of being, or action, but for ſuch a perſeverance as agrees to the condition of the thing to which it is applied.

Matt. x. 22.

Pſ. xiv. 1.

'Tis, for inſtance, preſcribed in Exodus, that Aaron ſhould *bear the judgment of the children of Iſrael* (the Urim and Thummim) *upon his heart before the Lord continually*; that is, (not in abſolute and rigorous acceptation continually, but) conſtantly ever when he went into the holy place to diſcharge the pontifical function, as the context declares. And our Saviour in the Goſpel ſaith of himſelf, Ἐγὼ πάντοτε ἐδίδαξα, *I always taught in the temple*; that is, very often, and ever when fit occaſion was preſented. And the Apoſtles, immediately after Chriſt's aſcenſion, ἦσαν διαπαντὸς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, *were*, as St. Luke tells us, *continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God*; that is, they reſorted thither conſtantly at the uſual times or canonical hours of prayer. In like manner thoſe in-

Exod. xxviii. 30.

Joh. xviii. 20.

Luke xxiv. 53.

junctions (of neareſt affinity) of *rejoicing*, of *giving thanks always*, and particularly of *praying without ceaſing*, (as I have ſhewn more largely in another diſcourſe,) are to be taken in a ſenſe ſo qualified, that the obſervance of them may be at leaſt morally poſſible. SERM. IX.

1 Theſſ. v. 16, 17, 18. Eph. vi. 18. Luke xviii.

Thus far warrantably we may limit the extenſion and mollify the rigour of this ſeemingly boundleſs term; but we can hardly allow any farther reſtriction, without deſtroying the natural ſignification, or diminiſhing the due emphaſis thereof. As far therefore as it is poſſible for us, we muſt endeavour always to perform this duty of gratitude to Almighty God: and conſequently, 1.

1. Hereby is required a frequent performance thereof: that we do often actually meditate upon, be ſenſible of, confeſs and celebrate the divine beneficence. For what is done but ſeldom or never, (as we commonly ſay,) cannot be underſtood done always, without a *catachreſis*, or abuſe of words too enormous. As therefore no moment of our life wants ſufficient matter, and every conſiderable portion of time miniſters notable occaſion of bleſſing God; as he allows himſelf no ſpacious intervals or diſcontinuances of doing us good: ſo ought we not to ſuffer any of thoſe many days (vouchſafed by his goodneſs) to flow beſide us, void of the ſignal expreſſions of our dutiful thankfulneſs to him; nor to admit in our courſe of life any long vacations from this duty. If God inceſſantly, and through every minute, demonſtrates himſelf gracious unto us; we in all reaſon are obliged frequently and daily to declare ourſelves grateful unto him.

So at leaſt did David, (that moſt eminent example in this kind, and therefore moſt appoſite to illuſtrate our doctrine, and to enforce the practice thereof;) for, *Every day*, ſaith he, *I will bleſs thee; I will praiſe thy name for ever and ever. Every day.* The heavenly bodies did not more conſtantly obſerve their courſe, than he his diurnal revolutions of praiſe: every day in his calendar was as it were feſtival, and conſecrated to thankſgiving. Neither did he adjudge it ſufficient to devote ſome ſmall parcels of each day to this ſervice: for, *My tongue*, ſaith he, *ſhall* Pſ. cxlv. 2. Pſ. xxxv. 28.

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ſpeak of thy righteouſneſs and of thy praiſe all the day long: and again, *My mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy righteouſneſs and thy ſalvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof.* The benefits of God he apprehended ſo great and numerous, that no definite ſpace of time would ſerve to conſider and commemorate them. He reſolves therefore otherwhere to beſtow his whole life upon that employment: *While I live I will praiſe the Lord: I will ſing praiſes unto my God while I have any being*: and, *I will bleſs the Lord at all times: his praiſe ſhall continually be in my mouth.* No man can reaſonably pretend greater impediments, or oftener avocations from the practice of this duty, than he, upon whom the burden of a royal eſtate, and the care of governing a populous nation, were incumbent: yet could not they thruſt out of his memory, nor extinguiſh in his heart, the lively ſenſe of divine goodneſs; which (notwithſtanding the company of other ſecular encumbrances) was always preſent to his mind, and, like a ſpirit, (excluded from no place by any corporeal reſiſtance,) did mingle with and penetrate all his thoughts, and affections, and actions. So that he ſeems to have approached very near to the complete performance of this duty, according to the extremity of a literal interpretation, and to have been always, without any intermiſſion, employed in giving thanks to God. The conſideration, methinks, of ſo noble a pattern, adjoined to the evident reaſonableneſs of the duty, ſhould engage us to the frequent practice thereof [a].

Pſ. lxxi. 8. 15. 24.

Pſ. cxlvi. 2. civ. 33. xxxiv. 1. lxxi. 6.

But if the conſideration of this excellent example do not, yet certainly that may both provoke us to emulation, and confound us with ſhame, of Epictetus, a heathen man, whoſe words to this purpoſe ſeem very remarkable: Εἰ γὰρ νῦν εἴχομεν, ſaith he in Arrian's Diſſert. ἄλλο τι ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν, καὶ κοινῇ, καὶ ἰδίᾳ, ἢ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον, καὶ εὐφημεῖν, καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας; οὐκ ἔδει καὶ σκάπτοντας, καὶ ἀρῶντας,

Lib. i. cap. 17.

[a] Εἰ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀνὴρ μυρίαις βαπτιζόμενος φροντίσι, καὶ πανταχόθεν περιελκόμενος, τοσαυτάκις περικάλυπτον θεὸν· τίνα ἂν ἴχομεν ἀπολογίαν ἢ συγγνώμην ἡμεῖς, τοσούτην σχολὴν ἄγοντες, καὶ μὴ σπεύδοντες αὐτὸν ἱκετεύοντες, &c. *Chryſ.* tom. v. p. 76.

καὶ ἐσθίοντας ᾄδειν τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν Θεόν; Μέγας ὁ Θεὸς, &c. SERM. IX.

that is, in our language, *If we underſtood ourſelves, what other thing ſhould we do, either publicly or privately, than ſing hymns to, and ſpeak well of God, and perform thanks unto him? Ought we not, when we were digging, or ploughing, or eating, to ſing a* (ſuitable) *hymn to him*[b]*? Great is God, in that he hath beſtowed on us thoſe inſtruments wherewith we till the ground: Great is God, becauſe he hath given us hands, a throat, a belly; that we grow inſenſibly, that ſleeping we breathe. Thus* (proceeds he) *ſhould we upon every occurrence celebrate God, and ſuperadd of all the moſt excellent and moſt divine hymn, for that he hath given us the faculty of apprehending and uſing theſe things orderly. Wherefore ſince moſt men are blind and ignorant of this, ſhould there not be ſome one, who ſhould diſcharge this office, and who ſhould for the reſt utter this hymn to God? And what can I, a lame (and decrepit) old man do elſe, than celebrate God? Were I indeed a nightingale, I would do what belongs to a nightingale; if a ſwan, what becomes a ſwan: but ſince now I am endued with reaſon, I ought to praiſe God. This is my duty and concernment, and ſo I do; neither will I deſert this employment, while it is in my power: and to the ſame ſong I exhort you all.* Thus that worthy philoſopher, not inſtructing us only, and exhorting with pathetical diſcourſe, but by his practice inciting us to be continually expreſſing our gratitude to God.

And although neither the admonition of prophets, nor precepts of philoſophers, nor the examples of both, ſhould prevail; yet the precedents, methinks, of dumb and ſenſeleſs creatures ſhould animate us thereto; which never ceaſe to obey the law impoſed on them by their Maker, and without intermiſſion glorify him. For, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth ſpeech, and night unto* Pſal. xix. 1, 2, 3.

[b] Πάντα τοίνυν τὸν βίον ἑορτὴν ἄγοντες, πάντη πάντοθεν περιῶμεν τὸν Θεὸν περιεσμένοι, γεωργοῦμεν αἰνοῦντες, σκάπτομεν ὑμνοῦντες, κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην πολιτείαν ἐντέχνως διαστρεφόμενοι. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* vii. p. 517.

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night ſheweth knowledge. There is no ſpeech nor language, where their voice is not heard. It is St. Chryſoſtom's argumentation; Καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν ἂν εἴη, ſaith he, τὸν λογικὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ τῶν ὁρωμένων ἁπάντων τιμιώτερον, ἔλαττον τῆς κτίσεως φέρειν κατὰ τὸν τῆς εὐφημίας λόγον· οὐκ αἰσχρὸν δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄτοπον, &c. *It were an ugly thing, that man, endued with reaſon, and the moſt honourable of all things viſible, ſhould in rendering thanks and praiſe be exceeded by other creatures: neither is it only baſe, but abſurd. For how can it be otherwiſe, ſince other creatures every day and every hour ſend up a doxology to their Lord and Maker? For,* The heavens declare the glory of God, &c.

In Pſ. cxliv.

If the buſy heavens are always at leiſure, and the ſtupid earth is perpetually active in manifeſting the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of their Creator; how ſhameful is it, that we (the flower of his creation, the moſt obliged, and moſt capable of doing it) ſhould commonly be either too buſy, or too idle to do it; ſhould ſeldom or never be diſpoſed to contribute our endeavours to the advancement of his glory? But,

2. *Giving thanks always* may import our appointing, and punctually obſerving, certain convenient times of performing this duty; that is, of ſerious meditation upon, and affectionate acknowledgment of the divine bounty. We know that all perſons, who deſign with advantage to proſecute an orderly courſe of action, and would not lead a tumultuary life, are wont to diſtinguiſh their portions of time, aſſigning ſome to the neceſſary refections of their body, others to the divertiſement of their minds, and a great part to the diſpatch of their ordinary buſineſs: otherwiſe (like St. James's *double-minded man*) they would be *unſtable in all their ways;* they would ever fluctuate in their reſolutions, and be uncertain when, and how, and to what they ſhould apply themſelves. And ſo, this main concernment of ours, this moſt excellent part of our duty, if we do not depute ſome vacant ſeaſons for it, and obſerve ſome periodical recourſes thereof, we ſhall be tempted often to omit it; we ſhall be liſtleſs to do it, apt

Jam. i. 8.

to defer it, and eaſily diverted from it by the encroachments of other leſs-behoving affairs. SERM. IX.

The Jews, to preſerve them in the conſtant exerciſe of this duty, had inſtituted by God a ſacrifice called תמיד (*juge*), rendered by the Greek tranſlators, ἡ διαπαντὸς θυσία, *the continual ſacrifice;* to which the divine author of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews ſeems to allude, when in theſe words he exhorts: Δι' αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διαπαντὸς τῷ Θεῷ· *By him therefore let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually,* (or the continual ſacrifice of praiſe,) *the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* As that ſacrifice therefore, being offered conſtantly at a ſet time, was thence denominated *continual;* ſo perhaps may we, by conſtantly obſerving ſome fit returns of praiſe and thankſgiving, be ſaid *always* to *give thanks.* Dan. viii. 11. Heb. xiii. 15.

In determining the ſeaſons and proportions of which, what other rule or ſtandard can we better conform to, than that of the royal Prophet? I ſhall not urge his example ſo much; (according to which we ſhould be obliged to a greater frequency;) for, *Seven times a day,* ſaith he, *do I praiſe thee, becauſe of thy righteous judgments:* but rather allege his general direction and opinion, propoſed to us in thoſe words of his; *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to ſing praiſes unto thy name, O thou Moſt High; to ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs every morning, and thy faithfulneſs every night. It is a good thing;* that is, a ſeemly, a convenient, a commendable, a due performance: *every morning;* that is, when our ſpirits, being recreated with ſleep, are become more vigorous, our memories more freſh, our fancies more quick and active: *to ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs;* that is, from a hearty ſenſe of our obligation, to acknowledge the free bounty of him, who, in purſuance of his former kindneſs, hath been pleaſed to accumulate new favours to us; to guard us by his watchful care, when we were buried, as it were, in a ſenſeleſs ignorance, and total neglect of our own welfare; to raiſe us from that temporary death, and to confer a new life upon us, reſtoring us to our health, to our means of ſubſiſtence, to all the neceſſary ſupports, Pſ. cxix. 64. Pſ. xcii. 1, 2. lv. 17.

SERM. IX. and the deſirable comforts of life: *every night* alſo; that is, when our ſpirits are exhauſted with action, and our minds tired with thoughtfulneſs; when we are become weary, not of doing only, but almoſt of being; we ſhould conclude our toils, and wrap up our cares in the ſweet ſenſe and grateful memory of his goodneſs, who hath protected us ſo many hours from the manifold dangers, and more ſins, to which, by our weakneſs, and our folly, and our bad inclinations, we are through every minute expoſed; and withal hath provided us ſo eaſy and ſo delightful a means of recovering our ſpent activity, of repairing our decayed ſtrength.

Thus if we conſtantly begin, and thus cloſe up, thus bound and circumſcribe our days, dedicating thoſe moſt
Pſ. lxv. 8. remarkable periods of time to bleſſing God, and *making*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice* in him: (ſince beginning and ending do in a manner comprehend the whole; and the morning and evening, in Moſes's computation and ſtyle, do conſtitute a day;) we may (not incongruouſly) be ſuppoſed and ſaid to *give thanks always*. But yet farther, this may import,

3. A vigilant attendance upon this duty, ſuch as men beſtow on their employments, whereof though the actual proſecution ceaſes, yet the deſign continually proceeds. As we ſay, ſuch a one is writing a book, building a houſe, occupying a piece of land, though he be at that preſent peradventure ſleeping, or eating, or ſatisfying ſome other deſire; becauſe his deſign never ſleeps, and his purpoſe perſiſts uninterrupted. And thus, it ſeems, we are to underſtand our Saviour and the Apoſtles, when they exhort
Rom. xii. 12. us προσκαρτερεῖν, *to continue inſtant in prayer and thankſ-*
Eph. vi. 18. *giving*; and ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει, to *watch with*
Col. iv. 2. *all perſeverance*; and γρηγορεῖν, to *wake in thankſgiving*;
Eph. i. 16. 1 Theſſ. v. 17. and μὴ παύεσθαι, *not to give over giving thanks*: and to
Luke xviii. 1. perform theſe duties ἀδιαλείπτως, *inceſſantly*, or *without giving off*; μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, *not to grow worſe, faint*, or *faulter*: (which is, in that place, made equivalent to, explicatory of doing duty always.) Which expreſſions denote a moſt

diligent attendance on theſe duties; that we may make them not a παέργον, a diverſion or by-buſineſs of our lives, allowing only a perfunctory and deſultorious endeavour on them; but eſteem them a weighty buſineſs, to be purſued with ſteadfaſt reſolution and unwearied induſtry. SERM. IX.

As our beings and powers did proceed from the goodneſs, ſo the reſults of them naturally tend to the glory of God; and the deliberations of our will ought to conſpire with the inſtincts of our nature; it ſhould be the principal deſign which our intention ſhould aim at, and our endeavour always drive on, to glorify our Maker. Which doing, we may be reputed to diſcharge this duty, and in ſome ſenſe ſaid *always* to *give thanks*. But farther,

4. This term [*always*] doth neceſſarily imply a ready diſpoſition, or habitual inclination, to give thanks, ever permanent in us: that our *hearts*, as David's was, be *fixed* always (that is, fittingly prepared, and ſteadily reſolved) to thank and *praiſe* God; that our affections be like tinder, though not always inflamed, yet eaſy inflammable by the ſenſe of his goodneſs. Pſ. cviii. 1.

'Tis ſaid of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful, and lendeth:* not for that he doth ever actually diſpenſe alms, or furniſh his poor neighbour with ſupplies; but becauſe his mind is ever inclinable to do it, when need requires. So a grateful man doth *always give thanks*, by being diſpoſed to do it upon all fit occaſions. 'Tis the habit that qualifies and denominates a man ſuch or ſuch in any kind or degree of morality. A good man is in Scripture frequently compared to a *tree bringing forth fruit in due ſeaſon;* and the root thereof is this habitual diſpoſition, which, being nouriſhed by the dew of heaven, and quickened by the benign influence of divine grace, ſprouts forth opportunely, and yields a plentiful increaſe of good fruit. Though we cannot always ſing, our organs may be always rightly tuned for praiſe; at leaſt they ſhould never be unſtrung, and wholly out of kelter. Pſ. xxxvii. 26.

We ſhould maintain in ourſelves a conſtant good temper of mind, that no opportunity ſurpriſe, and find us unprepared to entertain worthily the effects of divine favour:

SERM. IX. otherwiſe we ſhall as well loſe the benefit, as God the thanks and glory due to them. That we be always thus diſpoſed, is not impoſſible, and therefore requiſite. But moreover,

5. Laſtly, *Giving thanks always* imports, that we readily embrace every opportunity of actually expreſſing our thankfulneſs. For ſo, what in ſome places of Scripture is enjoined to be done *continually*, and *without ceaſing*, is in others only required to be done upon all opportunities. Which ſhews, that πάντοτε is to be expounded, not ſo much ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ, *at all times*, as ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, Eph. vi. 18. *in every ſeaſon*. So προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι, *praying upon every opportunity in your ſpirit:* and, Ἀγρυπνεῖτε δὲν ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι, Luke xxi. 36. *Be watchful, praying in every ſeaſon*. And this ſenſe ſeems probably to be chiefly intended by this Apoſtle, whenever he hath (as he hath often) this expreſſion, πάντοτε εὐχαριστεῖν, that we embrace every overture or fit occaſion of giving thanks.

'Tis true, no time is unſeaſonable to do it: every moment we receive favours, and therefore every minute we owe thanks: yet there are ſome eſpecial ſeaſons, that do more importunately require them. We ſhould be like thoſe trees that bear fruit (more or leſs) continually; but then more kindly, and more abundantly, when more powerfully cheriſhed by the heavenly warmth.

When any freſh, any rare, any remarkable benefit happens to us; when proſperous ſucceſs attends our honeſt endeavours; when unexpected favours fall as it were of their own accord into our boſoms; (like the grain in the golden age ſpringing ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα, without our care or our toil, for our uſe and enjoyment;) when we are delivered from ſtraits in our apprehenſion inextricable, ſurmount difficulties ſeeming inſuperable, eſcape hazards (as we ſuſpected) inevitable; then is a ſpecial ſeaſon preſented us of offering up the ſacrifice of praiſe to the God of mercy, help, and victory.

When we revolve in our minds (as we ſhould often do) the favourable paſſages of providence, that in the whole courſe of our lives have befallen us: how in our extreme

poverty and diſtreſs (when perhaps no help appeared, and all hopes ſeemed to fail us,) God hath raiſed us up friends, who have commiſerated, comforted, and ſuccoured us; and not only ſo, but hath changed our ſorrowful condition into a ſtate of joy; hath (to uſe the Pſalmiſt's expreſſions) *turned our mourning into dancing;* hath *put off our ſackcloth, and girded us with gladneſs;* hath *conſidered our trouble, and known our ſoul in adverſity;* hath *ſet our feet in a large room,* and furniſhed us with plentiful means of ſubſiſtence; how in the various changes, and adventures, and travels of our life, upon ſea and land, at home and abroad, among friends, and ſtrangers, and enemies, he hath protected us from wants and dangers; from devouring diſeaſes, and the diſtemperatures of infectious air; from the aſſaults of bloody thieves and barbarous pirates; from the rage of fire, and fury of tempeſts; from diſaſtrous caſualties; from treacherous ſurpriſes; from open miſchiefs, that with a dreadful face approached and threatened our deſtruction: then moſt opportunely ſhould we with all thankful exultation of mind admire and celebrate *our ſtrength, and our deliverer;* our faithful *refuge in trouble,* and *the rock of our ſalvation.* Pſ. xxx. 11. Pſ. xxxi. 7, 8.

Alſo when the ordinary effects of divine providence do in any advantageous manner preſent themſelves to our view; when we peruſe the volumes of ſtory, and therein obſerve the various events of human action; eſpecially the ſeaſonable rewards of virtue, the notable protections and deliverances of innocence, and the unexpected puniſhments of malicious wickedneſs: then we ſhould with thankful acclamations celebrate the divine goodneſs and juſtice; joining in concert with that heavenly choir, and ſaying, *Hallelujah; ſalvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.* Apoc. xix. 1, 2.

Or when we contemplate the wonderful works of nature, and, walking about at our leiſure, gaze upon this ample theatre of the world, conſidering the ſtately beauty, conſtant order, and ſumptuous furniture thereof; the glorious ſplendour and uniform motion of the heavens; the plea-

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ſant fertility of the earth; the curious figure and fragrant ſweetneſs of plants; the exquiſite frame of animals; and all other amazing miracles of nature, wherein the glorious attributes of God (eſpecially his tranſcendent goodneſs) are moſt conſpicuouſly diſplayed; (ſo that by them not only large acknowledgments, but even gratulatory hymns, as it were, of praiſe have been extorted from the mouths of Ariſtotle, Pliny, Galen, and ſuch like men, never ſuſpected guilty of an exceſſive devotion;) then ſhould our hearts be affected with thankful ſenſe, and our lips break forth into his praiſe.

Yea, from every object of ſenſe, from every event of providence, from every common occurrence, we may extract fit matter of thankſgiving: as did our Saviour, when, conſidering the ſtupid infidelity of thoſe proud people of Chorazin, Bethſaida, and Capernaum, (who were not at all affected by his miraculous works, nor moved to repentance by his pathetical diſcourſes,) and comparing it with the pious credulity of his meaner diſciples, he brake forth into that divine ejaculation; *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt concealed theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes.* Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς Ἰησοῦς εἶπε, ſaith the evangelical narration; *Upon that occaſion Jeſus thus ſpake:* he embraced that convenient opportunity of thankfully acknowledging God's wiſe and gracious diſpenſation. And frequent occaſion is afforded us daily (were our minds ſuitably diſpoſed) of doing the like.

Luke x. 21.

But ſo much concerning the time of performing this duty.

IV. We proceed to the matter thereof, *for all things.* St. Chryſoſtom (in his Commentary upon the 145th Pſalm) having enumerated ſeveral particulars for which we are bound to thank God; "Becauſe," (I recite his words punctually rendered,) "Becauſe, ſaith he, he hath "made us, who before had no being, and made us "ſuch as we are; becauſe he upholds us being made, "and takes care of us continually, both publicly "and privately, ſecretly and openly, with and without

"our knowledge; for all viſible things created for our "ſake, the miniſtry of them afforded to us; the conform- "ation of our bodies, the nobleneſs of our ſouls; his "daily diſpenſations by miracles, by laws, by puniſh- "ments; his various and incomprehenſible providence; "for the chief of all, that he hath not ſpared his only- "begotten Son for our ſake; the benefits conferred on "us by baptiſm, and the other holy myſteries, (or ſa- "craments;) the ineffable good things to be beſtowed "on us hereafter, the kingdom of heaven, the reſurrec- "tion, the enjoyment of perfect bliſs;" having, I ſay, in theſe words compriſed the things for which we are obliged to thank and praiſe God, he thus deſpondently concludes: (Ἂν γὰρ ἕκαστόν τις τούτων καταλέγῃ, εἰς πέλαγος ἄφατον ἐμπεσεῖται εὐεργεσιῶν, καὶ ὄψεται πόσων ἐστὶν ὑπεύθυνος τῷ Θεῷ.) "If any one ſhall endeavour to recount particu- "larly every one of theſe things, he will but plunge him- "ſelf into an unexpreſſible deep of benefits, and then per- "ceive for how unexpreſſibly and inconceivably many "good things he ſtands engaged to God." And to the like *non plus* doth the devout Pſalmiſt ſeem to be reduced, when he thus exclaims, *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the ſum of them! If I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the ſand.* Pſ. cxxxix. 17, 18. xxxvi. 5, 6. 7.

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I ſhall not therefore confound myſelf by launching too far into this immenſe ocean, nor ſtrive minutely to compute the incomprehenſible ſum of the divine benefits; but only obſerve, that in groſs, according to our Apoſtle's calculation, all things, which however happen to us, are ingredients thereof. No occurrence (great or ſmall, common or particular, preſent or paſt, pleaſant or ſad, perpetual or tranſitory) is excluded from being the ſubject of our thankſgiving: each one may prove beneficial to us; and we are with a cheerful contentedneſs and a grateful reſentment to receive them all from God's hand. But to obſerve ſome little diſtinction: I ſay,

1. We are to give thanks, not only for great and notable benefits, but for the leaſt and moſt ordinary favours

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of God: though indeed none of God's favours are in themſelves ſmall and inconſiderable. Men are wont to bleſs themſelves, if they receive but a tranſient glance from a prince's eye; a ſmile from a great perſonage; any ſlender intimation of regard from him that is in capacity to do them good. What is it then to receive the leaſt teſtimony of his good-will, from whom alone every good thing can be expected; upon whoſe diſpoſal all happy ſucceſs of our wiſhes, our hopes, and our endeavours do entirely depend! We repute him unjuſt, who withholds the leaſt part of what is due from the true owner: and is not he ingrateful then, that omits to render thanks for the leaſt of divine mercies?

1 Cor. xv. 41. *There is one glory of the ſun, another of the moon, another of the ſtars,* ſaith St. Paul. Some works of God indeed excel in luſtre; yet all are glorious, all are to be diſcerned, all to be eſteemed and thankfully entertained by us. The brightneſs of the one ſhould not wholly obſcure the other; if it do, it argues the weakneſs of our ſenſe, the dulneſs of our ſpiritual faculty. For every beam of light that delights our eye, for every breath of air that cheers our ſpirits, for every drop of pleaſant liquor that cools our thirſt, for every minute of comfortable repoſe, for every ſtep we ſafely take, for the happy iſſue of the leaſt undertaking, for eſcaping the vengeance due to an idle word or a wanton thought, we owe a hymn of praiſe to God. But,

2. We are to render thanks, not only for new and preſent benefits, but for all we have formerly, all that we may hereafter receive. We find David not only frequently acknowledging the gracious diſpenſations of providence toward him through the whole courſe of his life, but looking back in his thankful devotions as far as his very original being, and praiſing God for favours conferred on him beyond his memory, yea before his life. *I will praiſe thee,* ſaith he, *for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well. My ſubſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance, yet being im-*

Pſ. cxxxix. 14, 15, 16.

perfect; and in thy book all my members were written, SERM. IX.
which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them. And St. Paul, yet farther reflecting his grateful conſideration, bleſſes God for his favour commenced before the beginning of things. *Bleſſed,* ſaith he, *be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath* Eph. i. 3, 4. *bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt, according as he hath choſen us before the foundation of the world.*

Neither doth the memory only of former, and the enjoyment of preſent, but the hope and foreſight alſo of future bleſſings, worthily claim our thanks. For, ſaith St. 1 Pet. i. 3, Peter, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus* [4]. *Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead: to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reſerved in heaven for you.* Beaſts only, and men not much better than they, are affected with preſent good turns: but men of honeſt and generous temper reſent indifferently the obligations of all times. Senſe doth not confine their gratitude, nor abſence remove, nor age wear it out. What once is done, is ever done to them; and what of courteſy is purpoſed, ſeems to them performed. But having before diſcourſed ſomewhat largely concerning the remembrance of benefits, I leave this point. Furthermore,

3. We ſhould bleſs God, not only for new, rare, extraordinary accidents of providence, but for the common and daily benefits and indulgences thereof. Theſe favours are uſually the greateſt and moſt valuable in their own nature. (For what can be imagined of higher conſequence to us, than the preſervation of our lives and of our eſtates, by which they are comfortably maintained; than the continuance of our bodies in good health, and our minds in their right wits; than the knowledge of heavenly truth, the encouragements to virtue and piety, the aſſiſtances of divine grace, and the promiſes of eternal bliſs continually exhibited to us [c]?) Shall the commonneſs and continuance

[c] Quem vero aſtrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque viciſſitudines,

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of theſe exceeding favours, that they are not given us once only, and tranſitorily, but continued, (that is, given us ſo often as time hath inſtants,) and with an uninterrupted perſeverance renewed unto us; ſhall this abate and enervate our gratitude, which in all reaſon ſhould mainly increaſe and confirm it? But this point I alſo touched before, and therefore, forbearing to inſiſt thereon, I proceed.

4. We ſhould give thanks, not only for private and particular, but for public benefits alſo, and for ſuch as befall others. 1 Tim. ii. 1. *I exhort therefore,* ſaith St. Paul, *before all things, that ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and thankſgivings be made for all men:* not *prayers* only, for good things to be beſtowed on others; but *thankſgivings* alſo, for the benefits received by others. (And ὑπὲρ πάντων in our text, however otherwiſe commonly interpreted, may well admit this ſenſe alſo; and be taken indifferently, *pro omnibus, for all perſons,* and *propter omnia, for all things.*)

Vid. Chryſ. in 2 Cor. Or. 2.

We are all citizens of the world, and concerned in its good conſtitution; and thence obliged thankfully to adore the mighty Upholder and wiſe Governor thereof, praiſing him for all the general benefits liberally poured forth upon mankind. We partake in the commodities of civil ſociety; and therefore ſhould heartily thank him, by whoſe gracious diſpoſal order is maintained, peace continued, juſtice adminiſtered, plenty provided, our lives made ſafe and ſweet to us therein. We are members of a church, and highly intereſted in the proſperous eſtate and well-being thereof: when unity therefore is preſerved, and charity abounds; when knowledge is increaſed, and virtue encouraged; when piety flouriſhes, and truth triumphs therein; we are bound to render all poſſible thanks to the gracious beſtower of thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings.

We are much miſtaken in our account, if we either determine our own concernments, or meaſure this duty by the narrow rule of our private advantage: for ſubducting either the benefits commonly indulged to mankind, or

quem menſium temperatio, quemque ea quæ nobis gignuntur ad fruendum non gratum eſſe cogant; hunc hominem omnino numerare qui decet? *Cic. de Leg.* ii.

thoſe which accrue from the welfare of public ſociety, what poſſibility will remain of ſubſiſtence, of ſafety, of content unto us? what but confuſion, want, violence, and diſquiet? SERM. IX.

As we are concerned with our utmoſt endeavours to promote, to wiſh and pray for, to delight and rejoice in, the public good of mankind, the peace of our country, the proſperity of Sion; ſo we are to bleſs and thank him, by whoſe gracious help and furtherance they are attained.

If we conſult all hiſtory, (ſacred and civil,) we ſhall find it to contain hardly any thing elſe conſiderable, but the earneſt endeavours of good men for public benefit, and their thankful acknowledgments to the divine goodneſs for it. Moſes, David, Nehemiah, St. Paul, all the Prophets, and all the Apoſtles, what other things memorable did they do, but ſerve God in procuring public good, and bleſs God for conferring it?

Neither only as we are combined with others in common intereſt, but without ſelfiſh reſpects, purely out of charity, and humanity, and ingenuous pity, are we obliged to thank God for the benefits he is pleaſed to impart to others. If upon theſe accounts we are commanded to *do good to all men*; to *rejoice with thoſe that rejoice*; to *love even thoſe that hate us*, and *bleſs thoſe that curſe us*; 'tis (by fair conſequence) ſurely intended, that we ſhould alſo bleſs God for the good iſſue of our honeſt endeavours, or of our good wiſhes for them. Gal. vi. 10. Ro. xii. 15. Matt. v. 44.

And verily could we become endowed with this excellent quality of delighting in others' good, and heartily thanking God for it, we needed not to envy the wealth and ſplendour of the greateſt princes, not the wiſdom of the profoundeſt doctors, not the religion of the devouteſt anchorets, no, nor the happineſs of the higheſt angels: for upon this ſuppoſition, as the glory of all is God's, ſo the content in all would be ours. All the fruit they can perceive of their happy condition, of what kind ſoever, is to rejoice in it themſelves, and to praiſe God for it: and this ſhould we then do as well as they. My neighbour's good ſucceſs is mine, if I equally triumph therein; his riches

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are mine, if I delight to ſee him enjoy them: his ha is mine, if it refreſh my ſpirits: his virtue mine, if I by f bettered, and have hearty complacence therein. By means a man derives a confluence of joy upon h ſelf, and makes himſelf, as it were, the centre of all ci ſity; enriches himſelf with the plenty, and ſatiates h ſelf with the pleaſure, of the whole world: reſervin God the praiſe, he enjoys the ſatisfaction of all good happens to any.

Thus we ſee David frequently thanking God, not his favour only and mercy ſhewed particularly to him but for his common munificence toward all; for (to his own phraſes) *his goodneſs to all, and his tender me over all his works;* for *executing judgment in behal the oppreſſed;* for *feeding the hungry;* for *looſening priſoners;* for *opening the eyes of the blind;* for *ra them that are bowed down;* for *preſerving the ſtran* and *relieving the fatherleſs and widow;* for *lifting up meek;* for *loving, and caring for, and defending the r teous;* for *opening his hand, and ſatisfying the deſi every living thing;* for *giving to the beaſt his food, an the young ravens when they cry unto him;* in a word, his goodneſs to every particular creature, not exclu the moſt contemptible nor the moſt ſavage of all. how affectionately doth St. Paul every where thank for the growth in grace and ſpiritual wiſdom, for the tience in affliction and perſeverance in faith, of t good Chriſtians he writes unto! So ſhould, with an reſtrained exuberance, both our charity to men, and gratitude to God, abound. But moreover,

Pſ. cxlv. 9. cxlvi. 7, 8, 9.

Pſ. cxlvii. 6.

1 Pet. v. 7.

Pſ. v. 11.

civ. 28. cxlv. 16. cxlvii. 9.

5. We are obliged to give thanks, not only for ſ ſant and proſperous occurrences of providence, but thoſe alſo which are adverſe to our deſire, and diſtaſ unto our natural ſenſe; for poverty, ſickneſs, diſgr for all the ſorrows and troubles, the diſaſters and di pointments, that befall us. We are bound to pay tha not for our food only, but for our phyſic alſo: (w though ingrateful to our palate, is profitable for health;) we are obliged, in the ſchool of providence,

only for the good inſtructions, but for the ſeaſonable corrections alſo vouchſafed unto us, (whereby, though our ſenſes are offended, our manners are bettered[d].) Whatever proceeds from good purpoſe, and tends to a happy end, that is graciouſly deſigned, and effectually conduces to our good, is a fit ſubject of thankſgiving: and ſuch may all adverſities prove unto us. They proceed uſually from love and kind intention toward us: for, *Whom God loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth:* and, *I know, O Lord,* ſaith David, *that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me: in faithfulneſs,* that is, with a ſincere intention of doing me good.

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Heb. xii. 6.

Pſ. cxix. 75.

God thoroughly knows our conſtitution, what is noxious to our health, and what may remedy our diſtempers; and therefore accordingly diſpoſeth to us

——pro jucundis aptiſſima quæque——;

inſtead of pleaſant honey, he ſometimes preſcribes wholeſome wormwood for us. We are ourſelves greatly ignorant of what is conducible to our real good, and, were the choice of our condition wholly permitted to us, ſhould make very fooliſh, very diſadvantageous elections.

We ſhould (be ſure) all of us embrace a rich and plentiful eſtate; when as, God knows, that would make us ſlothful and luxurious, ſwell us with pride and haughty thoughts, encumber us with anxious cares, and expoſe us to dangerous temptations; would render us forgetful of ourſelves, and neglectful of him. Therefore he wiſely diſpoſeth poverty unto us; poverty, the mother of ſobriety, the nurſe of induſtry, the miſtreſs of wiſdom; which will make us underſtand ourſelves and our dependence on him, and force us to have recourſe unto his help. And is there not reaſon we ſhould be thankful for the means by which we are delivered from thoſe deſperate miſchiefs, and obtain theſe excellent advantages?

[d] Τὸν θεὸν ὁμοίως ἀνυμνεῖν χρὴ, καὶ κολάζοντα, καὶ ἀνιέντα κολάσεως· ἀμφότερα γὰρ πηδεμονίας, ἀμφότερα ἀγαθότητος, &c. *Chryſoſt. in Pſal.* cxlviii.

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We ſhould all (certainly) chooſe the favour and applauſe of men: but this, God alſo knows, would corrupt our minds with vain conceit, would intoxicate our fancies with ſpurious pleaſure, would tempt us to aſcribe immoderately to ourſelves, and ſacrilegiouſly to deprive God of his due honour. Therefore he adviſedly ſuffers us to incur the diſgrace and diſpleaſure, the hatred and contempt of men; that ſo we may place our glory only in the hopes of his favour, and may purſue more earneſtly the purer delights of a good conſcience. And doth not this part of divine providence highly merit our thanks?

We would all climb into high places, not conſidering the precipices on which they ſtand, nor the vertiginouſneſs of our own brains: but God keeps us ſafe in the humble valleys, allotting to us employments which we are more capable to manage.

We ſhould perhaps inſolently abuſe power, were it committed to us: we ſhould employ great parts on unwieldy projects, as many do, to the diſturbance of others, and their own ruin: vaſt knowledge would cauſe us to over-value ourſelves, and contemn others: enjoying continual health, we ſhould not perceive the benefit thereof, nor be mindful of him that gave it. A ſuitable mediocrity therefore of theſe things the divine goodneſs allotteth unto us, that we may neither ſtarve for want, nor ſurfeit with plenty.

In fine, the advantages ariſing from afflictions are ſo many, and ſo great, that (had I time, and were it ſeaſonable to inſiſt largely on this ſubject) it were eaſy to demonſtrate, that we have great reaſon, not only to be contented with, but to rejoice in, and to be very thankful for, all the croſſes and vexations we meet with: to receive them cheerfully at God's hand, as the medicines of our ſoul, and the condiments of our fortune; as the arguments of his good-will, and the inſtruments of virtue; as ſolid grounds of hope, and comfortable preſages of future joy unto us.

6. Laſtly, we are obliged to thank God, not only for

corporeal and temporal benefits, but alſo (and that principally) for ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings. We are apt, as to deſire more vehemently, to rejoice more heartily in the fruition, and more paſſionately to bewail the loſs of temporal good things; ſo more ſincerely and ſeriouſly to expreſs our gratitude for the reception of them, than for others relating to our ſpiritual good, to our everlaſting welfare. Wherein we misjudge and miſbehave ourſelves extremely. For, as much as the reaſonable ſoul (that goodly image of the divine eſſence, breathed from the mouth of God) doth in dignity of nature, and purity of ſubſtance, excel this feculent lump of organized clay, our body; as the bliſsful raviſhments of ſpirit ſurpaſs the dull ſatisfactions of ſenſe; as the bottomleſs depth of eternity exceeds that ſhallow ſurface of time, which terminates this tranſitory life; in ſuch proportion ſhould our appetite unto, our complacence in, our gratitude for ſpiritual bleſſings tranſcend the affections (reſpectively) engaged about theſe corporeal accommodations. SERM. IX.

Conſider that injunction of our Saviour to his diſciples: *In this rejoice not, that the ſpirits are ſubject unto you; but rather rejoice, becauſe your names are written in heaven.* Luke x. 20. *Rejoice not;* that is, be not at all affected with this (although in itſelf very rare accompliſhment, eminent privilege, glorious power of working that indeed greateſt of miracles, ſubjecting devils; that is, baffling the ſhrewdeſt craft, and ſubduing the ſtrongeſt force in nature) in compariſon of that delight, which the conſideration of the divine favour, in order to your eternal felicity, doth afford.

We are, 'tis true, greatly indebted to God for our creation, for that he hath extracted us from nothing, and placed us in ſo lofty a rank among his creatures; for the excellent faculties of ſoul and body, wherewith he hath endued us; and for many moſt admirable prerogatives of our outward eſtate: but much more for our redemption, and the wonderful circumſtances of unexpreſſible love and grace therein declared; for his deſcending to a conjunction with our nature, and elevating us to a participation of his; for dignifying us with more illuſtrious titles, and

SERM. IX. inſtating us in a ſure capacity of a much ſuperior happineſs. Our daily food deſerves well a grace to be ſaid before and after it: but how much more that conſtant proviſion of heavenly manna, the evangelical verity; thoſe ſavoury delicacies of devotion, whereby our ſouls are nouriſhed to eternal life? 'Tis a laudable cuſtom, when we are demanded concerning our health, to anſwer, *Well, I thank God;* but much more reaſon have we to ſay ſo, if our conſcience can atteſt concerning that ſound conſtitution of mind, whereby we are diſpoſed vigorouſly to perform thoſe virtuous functions, due from reaſonable nature, and conformable to the divine law. If for the proſperous ſucceſs of our worldly attempts; for avoiding dangers, that threatened corporal pain and damage to us; for defeating the adverſaries of our ſecular quiet, we make *Te Deum laudamus* our ἐπινίκιον, (our ſong for victory;) how much more for the happy progreſs of our ſpiritual affairs, (affairs of incomparably higheſt conſequence;) for eſcaping thoſe dreadful hazards of utter ruin, of endleſs torture; for vanquiſhing ſin and hell, thoſe irreconcileable enemies to our everlaſting peace; are we obliged to utter triumphal *anthems* of joy and thankfulneſs!

Pſ. ciii. 1, &c. This is the order obſerved by the Pſalmiſt: inciting his *ſoul* to *bleſs God* for *all his benefits*, he begins with the conſideration of God's mercy in pardoning his ſins; then proceeds to his goodneſs in beſtowing temporal favours. *Who forgiveth all thy ſins*, leads the van; *Who ſatisfieth thy mouth with good things*, brings up the rear in the enumeration and acknowledgment of God's benefits. That our minds are illuſtrated with the knowledge of God and his glorious attributes, of Chriſt and his bleſſed Goſpel, of that ſtraight path which conducteth to true happineſs; that by divine aſſiſtance we are enabled to elude the allurements, to withſtand the violences of temptation, to aſſuage immoderate deſires, to bridle exorbitant paſſions, to correct vicious inclinations of mind; requires more our hearty thanks, than for that we were able by our natural wit to penetrate the abſtruſeſt myſte-

ries, or to ſubjugate empires by our bodily ſtrength. The SERM. IX.
forgiveneſs of our ſins doth more oblige us to a grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodneſs, than ſhould God enrich us with all the treaſures contained in the bowels of the earth, or bottom of the ocean. One glimpſe of his favourable countenance ſhould more enflame our affections, than being inveſted with all the imaginable ſplendour of worldly glory.

Of theſe ineſtimable benefits, and all the advantageous circumſtances wherewith they are attended, we ought to maintain in our hearts conſtant reſentments; to excite our thankfulneſs, to kindle our love, to quicken our obedience, by the frequent contemplation of them.

Thus have I (though, I confeſs, much more ſlightly than ſo worthy a ſubject did require) proſecuted the ſeveral particulars obſervable in theſe words. I ſhould conclude with certain inducements perſuaſive to the practice of this duty; whereof I have in the tenor both of the former and preſent diſcourſe inſinuated divers, and could propound many more: but (in compliance with the time) I ſhall content myſelf briefly to conſider only theſe three very obvious ones.

Firſt therefore, we may conſider, that there is no diſ- I.
poſition whatever more deeply radicated in the original conſtitution of all ſouls endued with any kind of perception or paſſion, than being ſenſible of benefits received; being kindly affected with love and reſpect toward them that exhibit them; being ready with ſuitable expreſſions to acknowledge them, and to endeavour competent recompenſes for them. The worſt of men, the moſt devoid of all not only piety, but humanity and common ingenuity, the moſt barbarous and moſt wicked, (whom neither ſenſe of equity nor reſpect to law, no promiſe of reward or fear of vengeance, can anywiſe engage to do things juſt and fitting, or reſtrain from enormous actions,) retain notwithſtanding ſomething of this natural inclination, and are uſually ſenſible of good turns done unto them. Experience teaches us thus much; and ſo doth that ſure oracle of our Saviour: *If*, ſaith he, *ye do good* Luke vi. 33.

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Yea even beaſts, and thoſe not only the moſt gentle and ſociable of them, (the officious dog, the tractable horſe, the docile elephant,) but the wildeſt alſo and fierceſt of them, (the untameable lion, the cruel tiger, and ravenous bear, as ſtories tell us, and experience atteſts,) bear ſome kindneſs, ſhew ſome grateful affection to thoſe that provide for them.

Vid. Gell. lib. v. c. 14.

Neither wild beaſts only, but even inanimate creatures ſeem not altogether inſenſible of benefits, and lively repreſent unto us a natural abhorrence of ingratitude. The rivers openly diſcharge into the ſea thoſe waters, which by indiſcernible conduits they derived thence; the heavens remit in bountiful ſhowers what from the earth they had exhaled in vapour; and the earth by a fruitful increaſe repays the culture beſtowed thereon; if not, (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews doth pronounce,) it deſerves *curſing* and *reprobation*. So monſtrous a thing, and univerſally abominable to nature, is all ingratitude. And how execrable a prodigy is it then toward God, from whom alone we receive whatever we enjoy, whatever we can expect of good?

Heb. vi. 8.

II. The ſecond obligation to this duty is moſt juſt and equal. For, (as [a] he ſaid well,) *Beneficium qui dare neſcit, injuſte petit; He unjuſtly requires* (much more unjuſtly receives) *a benefit, who is not minded to requite it.* In all reaſon we are indebted for what is freely given, as well as for what is lent unto us. For the freeneſs of the giver, his not exacting ſecurity, nor expreſſing conditions of return, doth not diminiſh, but rather increaſe the debt. He that gives, indeed, according to human (or political) law, (which, in order to preſervation of public peace, requires only a punctual performance of contracts,) transfers his right, and alienates his poſſeſſion: but according to that more noble and perfect rule of ingenuity, (the law which God and angels and good men chiefly obſerve, and govern themſelves by,) what is given is but committed to

[a] Laberius.

the faith, depoſited in the hand, treaſured up in the cuſtody of him that receives it: and what more palpable iniquity is there, than to betray the truſt, or to detain the pledge, not of ſome inconſiderable trifle, but of ineſtimable good-will? *Excepta Macedonum gente,* ſaith Seneca, *non eſt ulla data adverſus ingratum actio: In no nation (excepting the Macedonians) an action could be preferred againſt ingrateful perſons, as ſo.* (Though Xenophon, no mean author, reports, that among the Perſians alſo there were judgments aſſigned, and puniſhments appointed for ingratitude.) However, in the court of heaven, and at the tribunal of conſcience, no offender is more conſtantly arraigned, none more ſurely condemned, none more ſeverely puniſhed, than the ingrateful man.

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Καλὸν δὲ θησαύρισμα κειμένη χάρις.

De Benef. lib. viii. cap. 6.

Since therefore we have received all from the divine bounty; if God ſhould in requital exact, that we ſacrifice our lives to the teſtimony of his truth; that we employ our utmoſt pains, expend our whole eſtate, adventure our health, and proſtitute all our earthly contents to his ſervice; ſince he did but revoke his own, it were great injuſtice to refuſe compliance with his demands: how much more, when he only expects from us and requires ſome few acknowledgments of our obligation to him, ſome little portions of our ſubſtance, for the relief of them that need, ſome eaſy obſervances of his moſt reaſonable commands?

III.

Thirdly, This is a moſt ſweet and delightful duty. *Praiſe the Lord,* ſaith the moſt experienced Pſalmiſt, *for the Lord is good; ſing praiſes to his name, for it is pleaſant:* and otherwhere, *Praiſe the Lord, for it is good to ſing praiſes to our God; for it is pleaſant, and praiſe is comely.* The performance of this duty, as it eſpecially proceeds from good humour, and a cheerful diſpoſition of mind; ſo it feeds and foments them; both root and fruit thereof are hugely ſweet and ſapid. Whence St. James; *If any man be afflicted, let him pray; is any merry, let him ſing pſalms.* (*Pſalms,* the proper matter of which is praiſe and thankſgiving.)

Pſ. cxxxv. 3.

Pſ. cxlvii. 1. ix. 1.

Jam. v. 13.

Other duties of devotion have ſomething laborious in

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them, ſomething diſguſtful to our ſenſe. Prayer minds us of our wants and imperfections; confeſſion induces a ſad remembrance of our miſdeeds and bad deſerts: but thankſgiving includes nothing uneaſy or unpleaſant; nothing but the memory and ſenſe of exceeding goodneſs.

All love is ſweet; but that eſpecially which ariſes, not from a bare apprehenſion only of the object's worth and dignity, but from a feeling of its ſingular beneficence and uſefulneſs unto us. And what thought can enter into the heart of man more comfortable and delicious than this, that the great Maſter of all things, the moſt wiſe and mighty King of heaven and earth, hath entertained a gracious regard, hath expreſſed a real kindneſs towards us? that we are in capacity to honour, to pleaſe, to preſent an acceptable ſacrifice to him, who can render us perfectly happy? that we are admitted to the practice of that wherein the ſupreme joy of paradiſe, and the perfection of angelical bliſs conſiſts? For praiſe and thankſgiving are the moſt delectable buſineſs of heaven; and God grant they may be our greateſt delight, our moſt frequent employment upon earth.

Vid. Pſal. lxix. 30, 31. l. 13, 14. 23.

To theſe I might add ſuch farther conſiderations: That this duty is of all moſt acceptable to God, and moſt profitable to us. That gratitude for benefits procures more, diſpoſing God to beſtow, and qualifying us to receive them. That the ſerious performance of this duty efficaciouſly promotes and facilitates the practice of other duties; ſince the more we are ſenſible of our obligations to God, the more ready we ſhall be to pleaſe him, by obedience to his commandments. What St. Chryſoſtom ſaith of prayer, It is impoſſible that he, who with competent promptitude of mind doth conſtantly apply himſelf thereto, ſhould ever ſin, is moſt eſpecially true of this part of devotion: for how can we at the ſame time be ſenſible of God's goodneſs to us, and willingly offend him? That the memory of paſt benefits, and ſenſe of preſent, confirms our faith, and nouriſhes our hope of future. That the circumſtances of the divine beneficence mightily ſtrengthen the obligation to this duty; eſpecially his abſolute freeneſs

Vid. diviniff. Chryſ. locum tom. v. p. 76.

in giving, and our total unworthineſs to receive; our very ingratitude itſelf affording ſtrong inducements to gratitude. That giving thanks hath *de facto* been always the principal part of all religion, (whether inſtituted by divine command, or prompted by natural reaſon, or propagated by general tradition;) the Ethnic devotion conſiſting (as it were totally) in the praiſe of their gods, and acknowledgment of their benefits; the Jewiſh more than half in euchariſtical oblations, and in ſolemn commemorations of providential favours; and that of the ancient Chriſtians ſo far forth, that bye-ſtanders could hardly diſcern any other thing in their religious practice, than that they ſang hymns to Chriſt, and by mutual ſacraments obliged themſelves to abſtain from all villainy. But I will rather wholly omit the proſecution of theſe pregnant arguments, than be farther offenſive to your patience. SERM. IX. Plin. Epiſt.

Now the bleſſed Fountain of all goodneſs and mercy inſpire our hearts with his heavenly grace, and thereby enable us rightly to apprehend, diligently to conſider, faithfully to remember, worthily to eſteem, to be heartily affected with, to render all due acknowledgment, praiſe, love, and thankful obedience for all his (infinitely great and innumerable many) favours, mercies, and benefits freely conferred upon us: and let us ſay with David, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who only doth wondrous things: and bleſſed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael from everlaſting to everlaſting: and let all the people ſay, Amen. Pſ. lxxii. 18, 19. Pſ. cvi. 48.

SERMON X.

ON THE KING'S HAPPY RETURN.

1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

I exhort therefore, that, firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority.

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SAINT Paul in his preceding diſcourſe having inſinuated directions to his ſcholar and ſpiritual ſon, Timothy, concerning the diſcharge of his office, of inſtructing men in their duty according to the evangelical doctrine; (the main deſign whereof he teacheth to conſiſt, not (as ſome men conceited) in fond ſtories, or *vain ſpeculations*, but in practice of ſubſtantial duties, holding a *ſincere faith*, maintaining a *good conſcience*, performing offices of *pure* and *hearty charity*;) in purſuance of ſuch general duty, and as a principal inſtance thereof, he doth here *firſt of all exhort*, or, doth *exhort that firſt of all* all kinds of devotion ſhould be offered to God, as for *all men* generally, ſo particularly for *kings* and *magiſtrates*. From whence we may collect two particulars. 1. That the making of *prayers for kings* is a Chriſtian duty of great importance. (St. Paul judging fit to *exhort* thereto πρῶτον πάντων, *before all other things*; or, to *exhort that before all things* it ſhould be performed.) 2. That it is incumbent on the paſtors of the church (ſuch as St. Timothy was) to take ſpecial care, that this duty ſhould be performed in the

1 Tim. i. 3.

Ver. 6.

Ver. 5. 19.

Παρακαλῶ δὴ πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι.

church; both publicly in the congregations, and privately in the retirements of each Chriſtian: according to what the Apoſtle, after the propoſing divers enforcements of this duty, ſubſumeth in the eighth verſe; *I will therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting.* SERM. X.

The firſt of theſe particulars, That it is a duty of great importance *to pray for kings*, I ſhall inſiſt upon: it being indeed now very fit and ſeaſonable to urge the practice of it, when it is perhaps commonly not much conſidered, or not well obſerved; and when there is moſt need of it, in regard to the effects and conſequences which may proceed from the conſcionable diſcharge of it.

My endeavour therefore ſhall be to preſs it by divers conſiderations, diſcovering our obligation thereto, and ſerving to induce us to its obſervance: ſome whereof ſhall be general, or common to all times; ſome particular, or ſuitable to the preſent circumſtances of things.

I. The Apoſtle exhorteth Chriſtians to *pray for kings* with all ſorts of prayer: with δεήσεις, or *deprecations*, for averting evils from them; with προσευχαὶ, or *petitions*, for obtaining good things to them; with ἐντεύξεις, or *occaſional interceſſions*, for needful gifts and graces to be collated on them: as, after St. Auſtin, interpreters, in expounding St. Paul's words, commonly diſtinguiſh; how accurately, I ſhall not diſcuſs: it ſufficing, that aſſuredly the Apoſtle meaneth, under this variety of expreſſion, to comprehend all kinds of prayer. And to this I ſay we are obliged upon divers accounts. Aug. Ep. 59. Beza, Grotius, &c.

1. Common charity ſhould diſpoſe us to pray for kings. This Chriſtian diſpoſition inclineth to univerſal benevolence and beneficence; according to that apoſtolical precept, *as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men*: it conſequently will excite us to pray for all men; ſeeing this is a way of exerting good-will, and exerciſing beneficence, which any man at any time, if he hath the will and heart, may have opportunity and ability to purſue. Gal. vi. 10.

No man indeed otherwiſe can benefit all: few men otherwiſe can benefit many: ſome men otherwiſe can be-

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nefit none: but in this way any man is able to benefit all or unconfinedly to oblige mankind, deriving on any ſome what of God's immenſe beneficence. By performing this good office, at the expence of a few good wiſhes addreſſed to the ſovereign Goodneſs, the pooreſt may prove benefactors to the richeſt, the meaneſt to the higheſt, the weakeſt to the mightieſt of men: ſo we may benefit even thoſe who are moſt remote from us, moſt ſtrangers and quite unknown to us. Our prayers can reach the utmoſt ends of the earth; and by them our charity may embrace all the world.

And from them ſurely kings muſt not be excluded. For if, becauſe all men are our fellow-creatures, and brethren by the ſame heavenly Father; becauſe all men are allied to us by cognation and ſimilitude of nature; becauſe all men are the objects of God's particular favour and care: if, becauſe all men are partakers of the common redemption, by the undertakings of him who is the common Mediator and Saviour of all men; and becauſe all men, according to the gracious intent and deſire of God, are deſigned for a conſortſhip in the ſame bleſſed inheritance: (which enforcements St. Paul in the context doth intimate:) if, in fine, becauſe all men do need prayers, and are capable of benefit from them, we ſhould be charitably diſpoſed to pray for them: then muſt we alſo pray for kings, who, even in their perſonal capacity, as men, do ſhare in all thoſe conditions. Thus may we conceive St. Paul here to argue: *For all men*, ſaith he, *for kings*; that is conſequently *for kings*, or particularly *for kings*; to pray for whom, at leaſt no leſs than for other men, univerſal charity ſhould diſpoſe us.

1 Tim. ii. 4, 5, 6.

Indeed, even on this account we may ſay, eſpecially *for kings*; the law of general charity with peculiar advantage being applicable to them: for that law commonly is expreſſed with reference to our neighbour, that is, to perſons with whom we have to do, who come under our particular notice, who by any intercourſe are approximated to us; and ſuch are kings eſpecially. For whereas the greateſt part of men (by reaſon of their diſtance

from us, from the obſcurity of their condition, or for want of opportunity to converſe with them) muſt needs ſlip beſide us, ſo that we cannot employ any diſtinct thought or affection toward them: it is not ſo with kings, who by their eminent and illuſtrious ſtation become very obſervable by us; with whom we have frequent tranſactions and mutual concerns; who therefore in the ſtricteſt acception are our neighbours, whom we are charged to love as ourſelves; to whom conſequently we muſt perform this moſt charitable office of praying for them. SERM. X.

2. To impreſs which conſideration, we may reflect, that commonly we have only this way granted us of exercising our charity toward princes; they being ſituated aloft above the reach of private beneficence[a]: ſo that we cannot enrich them, or relieve them by our alms; we cannot help to exalt or prefer them to a better ſtate; we can hardly come to impart good advice, ſeaſonable conſolation, or wholeſome reproof to them; we cannot profit or pleaſe them by familiar converſation. For as in divers other reſpects they reſemble the Divinity; ſo in this they are like it, that we may ſay to them, as the Pſalmiſt to God, *Thou art my Lord; my goodneſs extendeth not to thee.* Pſal. xvi. 2. Yet this caſe may be reſerved, wherein the pooreſt ſoul may benefit the greateſt prince, imparting the richeſt and choiceſt goods to him: he may be indebted for his ſafety, for the proſperity of his affairs, for God's mercy and favour toward him, to the prayers of his meaneſt vaſſal. And thus to oblige princes, methinks, we ſhould be very deſirous; we ſhould be glad to uſe ſuch an advantage, we ſhould be ambitious of ſuch an honour.

3. We are bound to pray for kings out of charity to the public; becauſe their good is a general good, and the communities of men (both church and ſtate) are greatly concerned in the bleſſings by prayer derived on them.

The ſafety of a prince is a great part of the common welfare; the commonwealth, as it were, living and breath-

[a] Privatorum iſta copia eſt, inter ſe eſſe munificos. *Auſon. ad Gratian.* Abſit, Auguſte, et iſtud ſancta divinitas omen avertat, ut tu a quoquam mortalium expectes vicem beneficii. *Mamerc. ad Julian.*

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ing in him: his fall, like that of a tall cedar, (to which he is compared,) ſhaking the earth, and diſcompoſing the ſtate; putting things out of courſe, and drawing them into new channels; tranſlating the adminiſtration of affairs into untried hands, and an uncertain condition.

Iſa. ii. 13.

Hence, *Let the king live,* (which our tranſlators render, *God ſave the king,*) was an uſual form of ſalutation, or prayer: and, *O king live for ever,* was a cuſtomary addreſs to princes, whereto the beſt men did conform, even in application to none of the beſt princes; as Nehemiah to king Artaxerxes, and Daniel to king Darius. Hence not only good king David is called *the light of Iſrael;* (*Thou ſhalt not,* ſaid Abiſhai, *any more go out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Iſrael;*) but even the wicked and perverſe king Zedekiah is by the prophet Jeremy himſelf (who had been ſo miſuſed by him) ſtyled *the breath of our noſtrils.* (*The breath,* ſaith he, *of our noſtrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits.*) Hence not only the fall of good king Joſiah was ſo grievouſly lamented; but a ſolemn mourning was due to that of Saul; and, *Ye daughters of Jeruſalem, weep for Saul,* was a ſtrain becoming the mouth of his great ſucceſſor king David. Hence the primitive Chriſtians, who could not be conſtrained to ſwear by the genius of Cæſar, did not yet, in compliance with the uſual practice, ſcruple to ſwear by their *health,* or *ſafety*[b]: that is, to expreſs their wiſhing it, with appeal to God's teſtimony of their ſincerity therein; as Joſeph may be conceived to have ſworn *by the life of Pharaoh.* Hence well might the people tell king David, *Thou art worth ten thouſand of us;* ſeeing the public was ſo much intereſted in his ſafety, and had ſuffered more in the loſs of him, than if a myriad of others had miſcarried.

1 Kings i. 25. 2 Kings xi. 12. 2 Chron. xxiii. 11. 1 Kings i. 31. Dan. ii. 4. iii. 9. v. 10. vi. 6. Neh. ii. 3. Dan. vi. 21. 2 Sam. xxi. 17. 2 Kings xxiv. 19. Jer. xxxii. 8. Lam. iv. 20. Zech. xii. 11. 2 Chron. xxxv. 24. 2 Sam. i. 12. 24.

Gen. xlii. 15, 16. 2 Sam. xviii. 3.

This honour likewiſe of a prince is the glory of his people; ſeeing it is founded on qualities or deeds tending to their advantage; ſeeing it can hardly be ſuppoſed that he ſhould acquire honour without their aid and concurrence, or that he ſhould retain it without their ſupport and their

[b] Sed et juramus, ſicut non per genios Cæſarum, ita per ſalutem eorum, quæ eſt auguſtior omnibus geniis. *Tert. Apol.* cap. xxxii.

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Prov. iv. 9.

ſatisfaction. And as the chief grace and beauty of a body is in the head, and the faireſt ornaments of the whole are placed there; ſo is any commonwealth moſt dignified and beautified by the reputation of its prince.

The wealth and power of a prince are the ſupports and ſecurities of a ſtate; he thereby being enabled to uphold and defend its ſafety, its order, its peace; to protect his people from foreign injuries and invaſions; to ſecure them from inteſtine broils and factions; to repreſs outrages and oppreſſions annoying them.

Pſal. lxxii. 4.

The proſperity of a prince is inſeparable from the proſperity of his people; they ever partaking of his fortunes, and thriving or ſuffering with him. For as when the ſun ſhineth brightly, there is a clear day, and fair weather over the world; ſo when a prince is not overclouded with adverſity or diſaſtrous occurrences, the public ſtate muſt be ſerene, and a pleaſant ſtate of things will appear. Then is the ſhip in a good condition, when the pilot in open ſea, with full ſails and a briſk gale, cheerfully ſteereth on toward his deſigned port.

Eſpecially the piety and goodneſs of a prince is of vaſt conſequence, and yieldeth infinite benefit to his country. For, *Vita principis cenſura eſt;* the life of a prince is a calling of other men's lives to an account. His example hath an unſpeakable influence on the manners of his people, who are apt in all his garb and every faſhion to imitate him[c]. His practice is more powerful than his commands, and often doth control them. His authority hath the great ſtroke in encouraging virtue, and checking vice, if it bendeth that way; the diſpenſation of honours and rewards, with the infliction of ignominies and corrections, being in his hand, and paſſing from it according to his inclinations. His power is the ſhield of innocence, the fence of right, the ſhelter of weakneſs and ſimplicity againſt

Eccluſ. x. 2.

[c] Flexibiles in quamcunque partem ducimur a principe, atque, ut ita dicam, ſequaces ſumus. Huic enim chari, huic probati eſſe cupimus; quod fruſtra ſperaverint diſſimiles. Eoque obſequii continuatione pervenimus, ut prope omnes homines unius moribus vivamus. *Plin. Paneg.*

Vita principis cenſura eſt, eaque perpetua; ad hanc dirigimur, ad hanc convertimur; nec tam imperio nobis opus eſt quam exemplo. *Ibid.*

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violences and frauds. His very look (a ſmile or a frown of his countenance) is ſufficient to advance goodneſs, and ſuppreſs wickedneſs; according to that of Solomon, *A king ſitting in the throne of judgment ſcattereth away all evil with his eyes.* His goodneſs pleaſing God procureth his favour, and therewith deduceth from heaven all kinds of bleſſings on his people. And if thoſe politic aphoriſms of the Wiſe Man be true, that *righteouſneſs exalteth a nation and eſtabliſheth a throne*; that *when it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth*; and *the ſame by the bleſſing of the upright is exalted*: then upon his inclinations to virtue the advancement and ſtability of public welfare do mainly depend. So, for inſtance, how did piety flouriſh in the times of David, who loved, favoured, and practiſed it! and what abundance of proſperity did attend it! What ſhowers of bleſſings (what peace, what wealth, what credit and glory) did God then pour down upon Iſrael! How did the goodneſs of that prince tranſmit favours and mercies on his country till a long time after his deceaſe! How often did God profeſs *for his ſervant David's ſake* to preſerve Judah from deſtruction; ſo that even in the days of Hezekiah, when the king of Aſſyria did invade that country, God by the mouth of Iſaiah declared, *I will defend this city to ſave it for mine own ſake, and for my ſervant David's ſake.*

We may indeed obſerve, that, according to the repreſentation of things in holy Scripture, there is a kind of moral connection, or a communication of merit and guilt, between prince and people; ſo that mutually each of them is rewarded for thevirtues, each is puniſhed for the vices of the other. As for the iniquities of a people, God withdraweth from their prince the free communications of his grace and of his favour, (ſuffering him to incur ſin, or to fall into misfortune; which was the caſe of that incomparably good king Joſiah, and hath been the fate of divers excellent princes, whom God hath ſnatched away from people unworthy of them, or involved with ſuch a people in common calamities; according to the rule propounded in the Law, of God's dealing with the Iſraelites in the caſe

Prov. xx. 8.
Prov. xiv. 9, 4. xvi. 12. 2 Sam. vii. 16. Prov. xi. 10, 11.
2 Sam. vii. 9. (Pſal. lxxii. 7.)
(2 Sam. vii. 16. 1 Kings xi. 13. Jer. xxxiii. 21. Pſ. lxxxix. 29. cxxxii. 10.) Iſa. xxxvii. 35. (1 Kings xi. 32. 34.)
2 Kings xxiii. 25. Iſa. iii. 1, &c.
Deut. xxviii. 36.

of their diſobedience; and according to that of Samuel, *If ye ſhall do wickedly, ye ſhall be conſumed, both ye and your king*:) ſo reciprocally, for the miſdemeanors of princes, (or in them, and by them,) God doth chaſtiſe their people. For what confuſions in Iſrael did the offences of Solomon create! What miſchiefs did iſſue thereon from Jeroboam's wicked behaviour! How did the ſins of Manaſſeh ſtick to his country, ſince that, even after that notable reformation wrought by Joſiah, it is ſaid, *Notwithſtanding the Lord turned not from the fierceneſs of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled againſt Judah, becauſe of all the provocations wherewith Manaſſeh had provoked him!* And how ſorely, by a tedious three years famine, did God avenge Saul's cruelty toward the Gibeonites! SERM. X. 1 Sam. xii. 25. (Prov. xxviii. 2.) 1 Kings xi. 33. 1 Kings xv. 30. 2 Kings xvii. 21. 2 Kings xxiii. 26. 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

Nor are only the ſins of bad princes affixed to people conſpiring with them in impiety; for even of king Hezekiah it is ſaid, *But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jeruſalem.* So the pride and ingratitude of an excellent prince were avenged on his ſubjects. And when good king David (God averting his grace from him) did fall into that arrogant tranſgreſſion of counting his forces, that, as Joab prudently foretold, became *a cauſe of treſpaſs to Iſrael*; and *God*, ſaith the text, *was diſpleaſed with this thing; therefore he ſmote Iſrael.* (Jer. xxxii. 32.) 2 Chr. xxxii. 25. 1 Chr. xxi. 3. 7.

David indeed ſeemed to apprehend ſome iniquity in this proceeding, expoſtulating thus, *Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have ſinned and done evil indeed: but as for theſe ſheep, what have they done?* But God had no regard to his plea, nor returned any anſwer to it; for indeed God's wrath began with the people, and their king's ſin was but a judgment executed on them; for *the anger*, it is ſaid, *of the Lord was kindled againſt Iſrael*, (by their ſin ſurely, which is the only incentive of divine wrath,) *and he moved David againſt them to ſay, Go, number Iſrael and Judah.* 1 Chr. xxi. 17. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

So indeed it is that princes are bad, that they incur

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great errors, or commit notable treſpaſſes, is commonly imputable to the fault of ſubjects; and is a juſt judgment by divine Providence laid on them, as for other provocations, ſo eſpecially for their want of devotion, and neglecting duly to pray for them. For if they conſtantly, with hearty ſincerity and earneſt fervency, would in their behalf ſue to God, who *faſhioneth all the hearts of men*, who eſpecially holdeth *the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth them whitherſoever he will*; we reaſonably might preſume, that God by his grace would direct them into the right way, and incline their hearts to goodneſs; that he would accompliſh his own word in the Prophet, *I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteouſneſs*: that we might have occaſion to pay thankſgivings like that of Ezra, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of our fathers, who hath put ſuch things as this in the king's heart, to beautify the houſe of the Lord which is in Jeruſalem.*

Pſal. xxxiii. 15. Prov. xxi. 1. Iſa. lx. 17. Ezr. vii. 27.

We are apt to impute the ill management of things, and the bad ſucceſs waiting on it, unto princes, being in appearance the immediate agents and inſtruments of it: but we commonly do therein miſtake, not conſidering that ourſelves are moſt guilty, and blameable for it; that it is an impious people which maketh an unhappy prince; that their offences do pervert his counſels, and blaſt his undertakings; that their profaneneſs and indevotion do incenſe God's diſpleaſure, and cauſe him to deſert princes, withdrawing his gracious conduct from them, and permitting them to be miſled by temptation, by ill advice, by their own infirmities, luſts, and paſſions, into courſes fit to puniſh a naughty people. So theſe were the cauſes of Moſes's *ſpeaking unadviſedly with his lips*, and that *it went ill with him for their ſakes*; of Aaron's forming the molten calf; of David's numbering the people; of Joſiah's unadviſed enterpriſe againſt Pharaoh Neco; of Zedekiah's rebellion againſt the Aſſyrians, (notwithſtanding the ſtrong diſſuaſions of the prophet Jeremy;) concerning which it is ſaid, *For through the anger of the Lord it came to paſs in Jeruſalem and Judah, until he had caſt them out from his preſence, that Zedekiah rebelled againſt the king of Babylon.*

Pſal. cvi. 32, 33. Ex. xxxii. Deut. ix. 2 Kings xxiv. 20.

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Conſidering which things it is apparent, that prayer for our prince is a great office of charity to the public; and that in praying for his ſafety, for his honour, for his wealth, for his proſperity, for his virtue, we do in effect pray for the ſame benefits reſpectively to our country: that in praying for his welfare, we do in conſequence pray for the good of all our neighbours, our friends, our relations, our families; whoſe good is wrapped in his welfare, doth flow from it, doth hang upon it.

We are bound, and it is a very noble piece of charity, to love our country, ſincerely to deſire and earneſtly to further its happineſs, and therefore to pray for it; according to the advice and practice of the Pſalmiſt: *O pray for the peace of Jeruſalem; they ſhall proſper that love thee.* Pſal. cxxii. 6. (cxxviii. 5.) *Peace be within thy walls, and proſperity within thy palaces.* Pſal. cxxii. 7. We are obliged more eſpecially upon the higheſt accounts, with deareſt affection to love the church, (our heavenly commonwealth, the ſociety of our ſpiritual brethren,) moſt ardently to tender its good, and ſeek its advantages; and therefore moſt urgently to ſue for God's favour toward it: being ready to ſay after David, *Do good, O God, in thy good pleaſure to Sion: build thou the walls of Jeruſalem.* Pſal. li. 18. *Ariſe, O Lord, and have mercy upon Sion: for the time to favour her, yea the ſet time is come.* Pſal. cii. 13. 16. (Iſa. lxi. 1.) Now theſe duties we cannot more eaſily, more compendiouſly, or more effectually diſcharge, than by earneſtly praying for our prince; ſeeing that if we do by our prayers procure God's favour to him, we do certainly draw it on the ſtate, and the church. If God, moved by our devout importunities, ſhall pleaſe to guard his perſon from dangers, and to *grant him a long life;* to endue his heart with grace, Pſal. xxi. 4. with the love and fear of himſelf, with a zeal of furthering public good, of favouring piety, of diſcountenancing ſin; if God ſhall vouchſafe to inſpire him with wiſdom, and to guide his counſels, to bleſs his proceedings, and to crown his undertakings with good ſucceſs: then aſſuredly we have much promoted the public intereſt; then infallibly, together with theſe, all other bleſſings ſhall deſcend on us, all good will flouriſh in our land. This

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was the ancient practice of Christians, and directed to this end. For, *We*, saith Lactantius to Constantine, *with daily prayers do supplicate God, that he would first of all keep thee, whom he hath willed to be the keeper of things; then that he would inspire into thee a will, whereby thou mayest ever persevere in the love of God's name; which is salutary to all, both to thee for thy happiness, and to us for our quiet*[d].

4. Wherefore consequently our own interest and charity to ourselves should dispose us to pray for our prince. We being nearly concerned in his welfare, as parts of the public, and as enjoying many private advantages thereby; we cannot but partake of his good, we cannot but suffer with him. We cannot live quietly, if our prince is disturbed; we cannot live happily, if he be unfortunate; we can hardly live virtuously, if divine grace do not incline him to favour us therein, or at least restrain him from hindering us. This is St. Paul's own consideration: *I exhort you*, saith he, *to make prayers for kings—that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*. Upon such an account God did command the Jews to pray for the welfare of that heathen state, under which they lived in captivity. *And seek*, said he, *the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.* And for the like cause the Christians of old deemed themselves bound to pray for the Gentile magistrates; according to that of Tertullian: *We pray for you, because with you the empire is shaken: and the other members of it being shaken, assuredly even we, how far soever we may be thought from troubles, are found in some place of the fall*[e]. Farther,

Nescio an plus moribus conferat princeps, qui bonos esse patitur, quam qui cogit. *Plin. Panegyr.*

Jer. xxix. 7.

[d] Cui nos quotidianis precibus supplicamus, ut te imprimis, quem rerum custodem voluit esse, custodiat; deinde inspiret tibi voluntatem, qua semper in amore divini nominis perseveres; quod est omnibus salutare, et tibi ad felicitatem, et nobis ad quietem. *Lact.* vii. 26.

[e] Vobiscum enim concutitur imperium: concussis etiam cæteris membris ejus, utique et nos, licet extranei a turbis æstimemur, in aliquo loco casus invenimur. *Tert. Apol.* cap. xxxii.

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5. Let us conſider, that ſubjects are obliged in gratitude and ingenuity, yea in equity and juſtice, to pray for their princes. For,

They are moſt nearly related to us, and allied by the moſt ſacred bands; being conſtituted by God, in his own room, the parents and guardians of their country; being alſo avowed and accepted for ſuch by ſolemn vows, and moſt holy ſacraments of allegiance: whence unto them as ſuch we owe an humble piety, a very reſpectful affection, a moſt dutiful obſervance[f]; the which we cannot better expreſs or exerciſe, than in our heartieſt prayers for their welfare.

They by God are deſtined to be the protectors of the church, the patrons of religion, the foſterers and cheriſhers of truth, of virtue, of piety: for of the church in the evangelical times it was propheſied, *Kings ſhall be thy nurſing fathers; thou ſhalt ſuck the breaſts of kings; kings ſhall miniſter to thee:* wherefore to them, not only as men and citizens, but peculiarly as Chriſtians, we owe the higheſt duty; and conſequently we muſt pay the beſt devotion for them. Iſa. xlix. 23. lx. 16. 10.

To them we ſtand indebted for the greateſt benefits of common life: they neceſſarily do take much care, they undergo great trouble, they are expoſed to many hazards for our advantages; that *under their ſhadow* we may enjoy ſafety and quiet, we may reap the fruits of our induſtry, we may poſſeſs the comforts and conveniences of our life, with ſecurity from rapine, from contention, from ſolicitude, from the continual fears of wrong and outrage. Lam. iv. 20.

To their induſtry and vigilancy under God we owe the fair adminiſtration of juſtice, the protection of right and innocence, the preſervation of order and peace, the encouragement of goodneſs, and correction of wickedneſs:

[f] Quem ſciens (Chriſtianus) a Deo ſuo conſtitui, neceſſe eſt, ut et ipſum diligat, et revereatur, et honoret, et ſalvum velit. *Tert. ad Scap.* ii.

Jurat per Deum, et per Chriſtum, et per Spiritum S. et per majeſtatem imperatoris, quæ ſecundum Deum generi humano diligenda eſt, et colenda. *Veget.* ii. 5.

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for they, as the Apoſtle telleth us, *are God's miniſters, attending continually on theſe very things.* They indeed ſo attend as to deny themſelves, and ſo forego much of their own eaſe, their pleaſure, their ſatisfaction; being frequently perplexed with cares, continually enſlaved to buſineſs, and ſubject to various inconveniences, rendering their life to conſiderate ſpectators very little deſirable.

Rom. xiii. 6.

As therefore, according to our Lord's obſervation, they are uſually ſtyled *benefactors*, ſo they really are; even the worſt of them (ſuch as Claudius, or Nero, of whom our Apoſtles ſpeak) in conſiderable meaſure; at leaſt in compariſon of anarchy, and conſidering the miſchiefs iſſuing from want of government. *Οὐ κολακεία ἐστὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα* *The matter is not flattery;* (ſaith St. Chryſoſtom, himſelf of all men fartheſt from a flatterer;) *but according to the reaſon of the caſe* we muſt eſteem ourſelves much obliged to them for the pains they ſuſtain in our behalf, and for the benefits we receive from them. For he indeed muſt be a very bad governor, to whom that ſpeech of the orator Tertullus may not without glozing be accommodated; *Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, moſt noble Felix, with all thankfulneſs.*

Luke xxii. 25.

Οὐ κολακεία ἐστὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν τοῦ δικαίου γίνεται λόγον. *Chryſ. in* 1 Tim. ii. 1.

Acts xxiv. 2, 3.

However, what Seneca ſaith of philoſophers, that *they of all men are moſt obliged, and moſt grateful to kings and magiſtrates, becauſe from their care they enjoy the leiſure, quiet, and ſecurity of contemplating and practiſing the beſt things; upon which account,* ſaith he, *they could not but reverence the authors of ſo great a good as parents*[g]; that is, or ſhould be, far more true of Chriſtians. *That leiſure* (to uſe his words) *which is ſpent with God,* and *which rendereth us like to God*[h]; the liberty of ſtudying divine truth,

[g] Nulli adverſus magiſtratus ac reges gratiores ſunt; nec immerito, nullis enim plus præſtant, quam quibus frui tranquillo otio licet. Itaque hi quibus ad propoſitum bene vivendi confert ſecuritas publica, neceſſe eſt auctorem hujus boni ut parentem colant. *Sen. Ep.* 73.

[h] Quanti æſtimamus hoc otium, quod inter Deos agitur, quod Deos facit? *Ibid.*

and of ſerving God with ſecurity and quiet; are ineſtimable benefits, for the which they are indebted to the protection of magiſtrates: therefore in all reaſon a grateful retribution of good will, and of all good offices, particularly of our prayers, is to be paid to them. *Is it not very abſurd*, ſaith St. Chryſoſtom, *that they ſhould labour and venture for us, and we not pray for them?* SERM. X.

Πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἄτοπον αὐτοὺς, &c. *Chryſ.* ubi ſupra.

6. Whereas we are by divine command frequently enjoined to fear and reverence, to honour, to obey kings; we ſhould look on prayer for them as a principal branch, and the neglect thereof as a notable breach of thoſe duties. For,

1 Pet. ii. 13. 17. Rom. xiii. 1. Tit. iii. 1. Prov. xxiv. 21.

As to honour and reverence, it is plain, that no exterior ſignification, in ceremonious unveiling or cringing to them, can ſo demonſtrate it, as doth the wiſhing them well in our hearts, and from thence framing particular addreſſes to the divine Majeſty for their welfare. Than which practice there can be no ſurer argument, that we hold them in great account and conſideration. And how indeed can we much honour them, for whom we do not vouchſafe ſo much as to offer our good wiſhes, or to mention them in our interceſſions unto him, who requireth us to make them for all men, and particularly for thoſe for whom we are concerned? Doth not this omiſſion evidently place them in the loweſt rank, beneath the meaneſt of our friends and relations? doth it not imply a very ſlender regard had to them?

And as for obedience, prayer for princes is clearly an inſtance thereof; ſeeing it may be ſuppoſed, that all princes do require it from their ſubjects. Not only Chriſtian princes, who believe God the ſole diſpenſer of all good things, and the great efficacy of devotion in procuring them from him, may be deemed to exact this beneficial office from us; but even heathens and infidels, from their dim notion of a ſovereign Providence, (which hath ever been common in the world,) have made an account of this practice; as we may ſee by that decree of the Perſian king in Ezra, charging his officers to furniſh the Jewiſh elders with ſacrifices,

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that, ſaid he, *they may offer ſacrifices of ſweet ſavour unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and of his ſons.* And that ſuch was the practice of the Romans even in their heatheniſh ſtate, doth appear from thoſe words of Pliny; *We have,* ſaith he, *been wont to make vows for the eternity of the empire, and for the welfare of the citizens; yea for the welfare of the princes, and in their behalf for the eternity of the empire*[i].

Ezra vi. 10.

Not only pious princes with a ſerious deſire will expect this duty from us; but even profane ones in policy will demand it, as a decent teſtimony of reſpect to them, and a proper means of upholding their ſtate; that they may ſeem to have place in the moſt ſerious regards and ſolemn performances of their ſubjects. So that to neglect this duty is ever a violation of our due obedience, and a kind of diſloyalty to them. Again,

Deo vel privatus, vel militans ſervit, cum fideliter eum diligit, qui Deo regnat autore. *Veget.* ii. 5.

7. The praying for princes is a ſervice peculiarly honourable, and very acceptable to God; which he will interpret as a great reſpect done to himſelf: for that thereby we honour his image and character in them, yielding in his preſence this ſpecial reſpect to them as his repreſentatives; for that thereby we avow his government of the world by them as his miniſters and deputies; for that thereby we acknowledge all power derived from him, and depending on his pleaſure; we aſcribe to him an authority paramount above all earthly potentates; we imply our perſuaſion, that he alone is abſolute ſovereign of the world, *the King of kings, and Lord of lords,* ſo that princes are nothing otherwiſe than in ſubordination to him, can do nothing without his ſuccour, do owe to him all their power, their ſafety, their proſperity, and welfare[k]; for that, in fine, thereby diſclaiming all other confidences *in any ſon of man,* we ſignify our entire ſubmiſſion to God's will, and ſole confidence in his providence. This

1 Tim. vi. 15.

Pſal. cxlvi. 3. cxviii. 8, 9.

[i] Nuncupare vota et pro æternitate imperii, et pro ſalute civium, imo pro ſalute principum, ac propter illos pro æternitate imperii, ſolebamus. *Plin. Paneg.*

[k] Temperans majeſtatem Cæſaris infra Deum, magis illum commendo Deo. *Tert. Apol.* cap. xxxiii.

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ſervice therefore is a very grateful kind of adoring our almighty Lord; and as ſuch St. Paul recommendeth it in the words immediately ſubjoined to our text, *For this,* 1 Tim. ii. 3. ſaith he, *is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour.*

8. Let us conſider, that whereas wiſdom, guiding our piety and charity, will eſpecially incline us to place our devotion there where it will be moſt needful and uſeful; we therefore chiefly muſt pray for kings, becauſe they do moſt need our prayers.

The office is moſt high, and hard to diſcharge well or happily: wherefore they need extraordinary ſupplies of gifts and graces from the divine bounty.

Their affairs are of greateſt weight and importance, requiring anſwerable ſkill and ſtrength to ſteer and wield them: wherefore they need from the fountain of wiſdom and power ſpecial communications of light, of courage, of ability, to conduct, to ſupport, to fortify them in their managements; they need that God ſhould *uphold them* Pſal. li. 12. *πνεύματι ἡγεμονικῷ*, with *that princely ſpirit,* for which king David prayed.

They often are to deliberate about matters of dark and uncertain conſequence; they are to judge in caſes of dubious and intricate nature; the which to reſolve prudently, or to determine uprightly, no human wiſdom ſufficiently can enable: wherefore they need *the ſpirit of* Iſa. xi. 2. *counſel,* and *the ſpirit of judgment,* from the ſole diſpenſer xxviii. 6. of them, the great *Counſellor* and moſt *righteous Judge.* Iſa. ix. 6. The wiſeſt and ableſt of them hath reaſon to pray with Solomon, *Give thy ſervant an underſtanding heart, to* Pſal. vii. 11. *judge thy people, that I may diſcern between good and bad:* 1 Kings iii. 9. Wiſd. ix. 4. *for who is able to judge this thy ſo great a people?* That (Pſal. lxxii. 1.) ſo what the Wiſe Man ſaith may be verified, *A divine* Prov. xvi. *ſentence is in the lips of the king, his mouth tranſgreſſ-* 10. *eth not in judgment:* and that of the wiſe woman, *As* 2 Sam. xiv. *an angel of God, ſo is my lord the king to diſcern good* 17. *and bad.*

They commonly are engaged in enterpriſes of greateſt difficulty, inſuperable by the might or induſtry of man;

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1 Sam. ii. 9. Eccleſ. ix. 11. Pſal. xxxiii. 16.

They are moſt expoſed to dangers and diſaſters; (ſtanding like high towers, moſt obnoxious to the winds and tempeſts of fortune;) having uſually many envious ill-willers, many diſaffected malecontents, many both open enemies and cloſe inſidiators; from whoſe force or treachery no human providence can ſufficiently guard them: they do therefore need the protection of the ever-vigilant *Keeper of Iſrael* to ſecure them: for, *Except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh but in vain;* except the Lord preſerve the king, his guards, his armies ſurround him to no purpoſe.

Pſal. xxi. 4. xci. 1. cxxvii. 1. xxxiii. 16.

They have the natural infirmities of other men, and far beyond other men are ſubject to external temptations. The malicious ſpirit (as in the caſe of Job, of David, of Ahab, of Joſhua the High Prieſt, is expreſſed) is ever waiting for occaſion, ever craving permiſſion of God to ſeduce and pervert them; ſucceſs therein being extremely conducible to his villainous deſigns. The world continually doth aſſault them with all its advantages, with all its baits of pleaſure, with all its enticements to pride and vanity, to oppreſſion and injuſtice, to ſloth, to luxury, to exorbitant ſelf-will and ſelf-conceit, to every ſort of vicious practice. Their eminency of ſtate, their affluence of wealth, their uncontrollable power, their exemption from common reſtraints, their continual diſtractions and encumbrances by varieties of care and buſineſs, their multitude of obſequious followers, and ſcarcity of faithful friends to adviſe or reprove them, their having no obſtacles before them to check their wills, to croſs their humours, to curb their luſts and paſſions, are ſo many dangerous ſnares unto them: wherefore they do need plentiful meaſures of grace, and mighty aſſiſtances from God, to preſerve them

Zech. iii. 1. Eccleſ. viii. 4.

from the worſt errors and ſins; into which otherwiſe it is almoſt a miracle if they are not plunged. SERM. X.

And being they are ſo liable to ſin, they muſt conſequently ſtand often in need of God's mercy to bear with them, and to pardon them. ὁ πλεῖστα πταίοντων, πλεῖστ' ἂν μαρτάνοι βροτῶν.

They therefore, upon ſo many accounts needing ſpecial help and grace from Heaven, do moſt need prayers to derive it thence for them.

All princes indeed do need them. Good princes need many prayers for God's help, to uphold and confirm them in their virtue: bad princes need deprecations of God's wrath and judgment toward them, for offending his Majeſty; together with ſupplications for God's grace to convert and reform them: the moſt deſperate and incorrigible need prayers, that God would overrule and reſtrain them from doing miſchief to themſelves and others. All princes having many avocations and temptations, hindering them to pray enough for themſelves, do need ſupplemental aids from the devotions of others.

Wherefore if we love them, if we love our country, if we love ourſelves, if we tender the intereſts of truth, of piety, of common good, we, conſidering their caſe, and manifold need of prayers, will not fail earneſtly to ſue for them; that God would afford needful aſſiſtance to them in the adminiſtration of their high office, in the improvement of their great talents, in the conduct and management of their arduous affairs; that he graciouſly would direct them in their perplexed counſels, would back them in their difficult undertakings, would protect their perſons from dangers, would keep their hearts from the prevalency of temptations, would pardon their failings and treſpaſſes. Again,

9. Whereas God hath declared, that he hath ſpecial regard to princes, and a more than ordinary care over them, becauſe they have a peculiar relation to him, as his repreſentatives, the *miniſters of his kingdom*, the main inſtruments of his providence, whereby he conveyeth his favours, and diſpenſeth his juſtice to men; becauſe alſo the good of mankind, which he eſpecially tendereth, is Wiſd. vi. 4.

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mainly concerned in their welfare; whereas, I ſay, *it is he that giveth ſalvation unto kings;* that *giveth great deliverance to his king, and ſheweth mercy to his anointed;* that hath *the king's heart, and his breath,* and *all his ways in his hand:* even upon this account our prayers for them are the more required. For it is a method of God, and an eſtabliſhed rule of divine providence, not to diſpenſe ſpecial bleſſings without particular conditions, and the concurrence of our duty in obſervance of what he preſcribeth in reſpect to them. Seeing then he hath enjoined, that, in order to our obtaining thoſe great benefits which iſſue from his ſpecial care over princes, we ſhould pray for it, and ſeek it from his hands; the omiſſion of this duty will intercept it, or bereave us of its advantages; nor in that caſe may we expect any bleſſings of that kind. As without praying for ourſelves we muſt not expect private favours from heaven; ſo without praying for our prince we cannot well hope for public bleſſings. For, as a profane perſon (who in effect diſavoweth God, by not regarding to ſeek his favour and aid) is not qualified to receive any good from him; ſo a profane nation (which diſclaimeth God's government of the world, by not invoking his benediction on thoſe who moderate it under him) is not well capable of common benefits. It is upon all accounts true which Ezra ſaid, *The hand of our God is upon all them for good that ſeek him: but his power and his wrath is againſt all them that forſake him.* If therefore we deſire that our prince ſhould not loſe God's ſpecial regard, if we would not forfeit the benefits thereof to ourſelves, we muſt conſpire in hearty prayers for him.

Pſal. cxliv. 10. xxi. 1. xviii. 50. (lxiii. 11.) 1 Kings xxii. 51. Prov. xxi. 1. Dan. v. 23.

Ezr. viii. 22. Liv. v. 51. Hor. Od. iii. 6.

10. To engage and encourage us in which practice, we may farther conſider, that ſuch prayers, offered duly, (with frequency and conſtancy, with ſincerity and zeal,) do always turn to good account, and never want good effect: the which, if it be not always eaſily diſcernible, yet it is certainly real; if it be not perfect as we may deſire, yet it is competent, as expediency requireth, or as the condition of things will bear.

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There may be impediments to a full ſucceſs of the beſt prayers; they may not ever prevail to render princes completely good, or extremely proſperous: for ſome concurrence of their own will is requiſite to produce their virtue, God rarely working with irreſiſtible power, or fatal efficacy; and the ſtate of things, or capacities of perſons, are not always fitly ſuited for proſperity. Yet are not ſuch prayers ever wholly vain or fruitleſs; for God never preſcribeth means unavailable to the end: he never would have commanded us particularly to pray for kings, if he did not mean to beſtow a good iſſue to that practice.

And, ſurely, he that hath promiſed to hear all requeſts, with faith and ſincerity and inceſſant earneſtneſs preſented to him, cannot fail to hear thoſe which are of ſuch conſequence, which are ſo agreeable to his will, which do include ſo much honeſty and charity. In this caſe, ſurely, we may have ſome confidence, according to that of St. John, *This is the confidence we have in him, that, if we aſk any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* 1 Joh. v. 14.

As the good biſhop, obſerving St. Auſtin's mother, with what conſtancy and paſſionateneſs ſhe did pray for her ſon, being then engaged in ways of error and vanity, did encourage her, ſaying, *It is impoſſible that a ſon of thoſe devotions ſhould periſh;* ſo may we hopefully preſume, and encourage ourſelves, that a prince will not miſcarry, for whoſe welfare many good people do earneſtly ſolicit: *Fieri non poteſt, ut princeps iſtarum lacrymarum pereat.* Fieri non poteſt, ut filius iſtarum lacrymarum pereat. *Aug. Conf.* iv. 12.

You know in general the mighty efficacy of prayer; what pregnant aſſurances there are, and how wonderful inſtances thereof occur in holy Scripture, both in relation to public and private bleſſings: how it is often promiſed, that *all things, whatſoever we ſhall aſk in prayer believing, we ſhall receive;* and that *whoever aſketh receiveth, and he that ſeeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it ſhall be opened:* how the prayer of Abraham did heal Abimelech and his family of barrenneſs; how the prayers of Moſes did quench the fire, and cure the bitings of the fiery ſerpents; how the prayer of Joſhua did arreſt the ſun; how the prayer of Hannah did procure Samuel to her, as his James v. 16. Matt. xxi. 22. Matt. vii. 8. Gen. xx. 17. Num. xi. 2. xxi. 7. (Pſ. cvi. 30. O. T.) Joſh. x. 12. 1 Sam. i. 10.

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name doth import; how Elias's prayers did open and ſhut the heavens; how the ſame holy Prophet's prayer did reduce a departed ſoul, and that of Eliſha did effect the ſame, and that of another Prophet did reſtore Jeroboam's withered hand; how the prayers of God's people frequently did *raiſe them up ſaviours*, and *when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivered them out of their diſtreſſes*: how the prayers of [a] Aſa diſcomfited a million of Arabians, and thoſe of Jehoſhaphat deſtroyed a numerous army of his enemies by their own hands, and thoſe of Hezekiah brought down an angel from heaven to cut off the Aſſyrians, and thoſe of Manaſſes reſtored him to his kingdom, and thoſe of Eſther ſaved her people from the brink of ruin, and thoſe of Nehemiah inclined a Pagan king's heart to favour his pious deſign for re-edifying Jeruſalem, and thoſe of Daniel obtained ſtrange viſions and diſcoveries. How [b] Noah, Job, Daniel, Moſes, and Samuel are repreſented as powerful interceſſors with God; and conſequently it is intimated, that the great things achieved by them were chiefly done by the force of their prayers.

Luke iv. 25. Jam. v. 17, 18. 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22. 2 Kings iv. 33. 1 Kings xiii. 6. Deut. iv. 29. Neh. ix. 27. Pſal. cvi. 44. cvii. 6. 13. 19. 28. Jud. iii. 15. iv. 3. vi. 7. x. 21. [a] 2 Chr. xiv. 11. xx. 3. 12. 23. xxxii. 20, 21. xxxiii. 12, 13. Eſth. iv. 16. Neh. i. xi. ii. 4. Dan. chap. ii. iv. v. vii. viii. ix. x. xi. xii. [b] Ezek. xiv. 14. Jer. xv. 1.

And ſeeing prayers in ſo many caſes are ſo effectual, and work ſuch miracles; what may we hope from them in this, wherein God ſo expreſsly and particularly directeth us to uſe them? If our prayers can ſo much avail to our perſonal and private advantage, if they may be very helpful to our friends; how much ſhall the devotions of many good men, all levelled at one mark, and aiming at a public moſt conſiderable good, be prevalent with the divine goodneſs? However, if God be not moved by prayers to convert a prince from all ſin, to make him do all the good he might, to bleſs him in all matters; yet he may thence be induced to reſtrain him from much evil, to keep him from being worſe, or from doing worſe than otherwiſe would be; he may diſpoſe him to do many things well, or better than of himſelf he would do; he may preſerve him from many diſaſters otherwiſe incident to him: which will be conſiderable effects of prayer.

11. I ſhall add but one general conſideration more,

which is this, that prayer is the only allowable way of redreſſing our caſe, if we do ſuffer by or for princes. SERM. X.

Are they bad, or do they miſdemean themſelves in their adminiſtration of government and juſtice? we may not by any violent or rough way attempt to reclaim them; for they are not accountable to us, or liable to our correction. *Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who ſhall ſay to him, What doeſt thou?* was the Preacher's doctrine. Eccleſ. viii. 4.

Do they oppreſs us, or abuſe us? do they treat us harſhly, or cruelly perſecute us? we muſt not kick againſt them, nor ſtrive to right ourſelves by reſiſtance. For, *Againſt a king*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *there is no riſing up*: and, *Who*, ſaid David, *can ſtretch out his hand againſt the Lord's anointed, and be guiltleſs?* and, *They*, ſaith St. Paul, *that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* Prov. xxx. 31. 1 Sam. xxvi. 9. Rom. xiii. 2.

We muſt not ſo much as eaſe our ſtomach, or diſcharge our paſſion, by railing or inveighing againſt them. For, *Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people*, is a divine law; and, to *blaſpheme*, or revile, *dignities*, is by St. Peter and St. Jude reprehended as a notable crime. Exod. xxii. 28. Acts xxiii. 5. 2 Pet. ii. 10. Jude 8.

We muſt not be bold or free in taxing their actions. For, *Is it fit*, ſaid Elihu, *to ſay to a king, Thou art wicked, and to princes, Ye are ungodly?* and, to *reproach the foot-ſteps of God's anointed*, is implied to be an impious practice. Job xxxiv. 18. Pſ. lxxxix. 51.

We muſt forbear even complaining and murmuring againſt them. For murmurers are condemned as no mean ſort of offenders; and the Jews in the wilderneſs were ſorely puniſhed for ſuch behaviour. Jude 16.

We muſt not (according to the Preacher's advice) ſo much as *curſe them in our thoughts*; or not entertain ill conceits and ill wiſhes in our minds toward them. Eccleſ. x. 20. (Iſa. viii. 21.)

To do theſe things is not only high preſumption in regard to them, (inconſiſtent with the dutiful affection and reſpect which we owe to them,) but it is flat impiety toward God, and an invaſion of his authority; who alone is *King of kings*, and hath reſerved to himſelf the prerogative

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of judging, of rebuking, of puniſhing kings, when he findeth cauſe.

Theſe were the miſdemeanors of thoſe in the late times, who, inſtead of praying for their ſovereign, did clamour and rail at him, did aſperſe him with foul imputations, did accuſe his proceedings, did raiſe tumults, and levy war againſt him, pretending by rude force to reduce him to his duty; ſo uſurping on their prince, or rather on God himſelf; aſſuming his right, and taking his work out of his hands; diſcovering alſo therein great profaneneſs of mind, and diſtruſt of God's providence; as if God, being implored by prayer, could not, or would not, had it been needful, without ſuch irregular courſes, have redreſſed thoſe evils in Church or State, which they pretended to feel or fear.

Nothing therefore in ſuch caſes is left to us for our remedy or eaſe, but having recourſe to God himſelf, and ſeeking relief from his hand in his good time, by converting our prince, or directing him into a good courſe; however comforting ourſelves in the conſcience of ſubmitting to God's will[f].

This is the only method St. Paul did preſcribe, even when Nero, a moſt vile, flagitious man, a ſorry and naughty governor as could be, a monſtrous tyrant, and moſt bloody perſecutor, (the very inventor of perſecution,) did ſway the empire[g]. He did not adviſe Chriſtians to ſtand upon their guard, to contrive plots, to provide arms, to raiſe mutinies and inſurrections againſt him; but to offer ſupplications, prayers, and interceſſions for him, as the beſt means of their ſecurity and comfort[h]. And this was the courſe of the primitive Chriſtians, during their

[f] Abſit enim ut indigne feramus ea nos pati quæ optamus, aut ultionem à nobis aliquam machinemur, quam a Deo expectamus. *Tert. ad Scap.* 2.

[g] Qui non dicam regum, ſed omnium hominum, et vel beſtiarum ſordidiſſimus, dignus exſtitit qui perſecutionem in Chriſtianos primus inciperet. *Sulp. Sev.* ii. 40.

[h] Ita nos magis oramus pro ſalute imperatoris, ab eo eam poſtulantes qui præſtare poteſt. Et utique ex diſciplina patientiæ divinæ agere nos, ſatis manifeſtum eſſe vobis poteſt, cum tanta hominum multitudo, pars pene major civitatis cujuſque, in ſilentio et modeſtia agimus. *Tert. ad Scap.* 2.

hard condition under the domination of Heathen princes, impugners of their religion: *Prayers and tears were* then the only *arms of the church;* whereby they long defended it from ruin, and at laſt advanced it to moſt glorious proſperity[i]. SERM. X.

Indeed, if, not aſſuming the liberty to find fault with princes, we would practiſe the duty of ſeeking God for his bleſſing on their proceedings; if, forbearing to ſcan and cenſure acts of ſtate, we would earneſtly implore God's direction of them; if, leaving to conceive diſguſts, and vent complaints about the ſtate of things, we would aſſiduouſly petition God for the ſettlement of them in good order; if, inſtead of being ſhrewd politicians, or ſmart judges in ſuch matters, we would be devout orators and humble ſolicitors at the throne of grace; our endeavours ſurely would find much better effect toward public advantage: we certainly might do more good in our cloſets by a few hearty wiſhes uttered there, than by all our tattling or jangling politics in corners.

There are great contrivances to ſettle things: every one hath his model of ſtate, or method of policy, to communicate for ordering the ſtate; each is zealous for his own conceit, and apt to be diſpleaſed with thoſe who diſſent from him: but it is, as the faireſt and juſteſt, ſo the ſureſt and likelieſt way of reducing things to a firm compoſure, (without more ado, letting the world alone, to move on its own hinges, and not impertinently troubling ourſelves or others with the conduct of it,) ſimply to requeſt of Almighty God, the ſovereign Governor and ſole Diſpoſer of things, that he would lead his own vicegerents in the management of the charge by himſelf committed to them. *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving let your requeſts be made known to God,* is a rule very applicable to this caſe. Phil. iv. 6.

As God's providence is the only ſure ground of our

[i] Fundendo ſanguinem, et patiendo magis quam faciendo contumelias, Chriſti fundata eſt eccleſia; perſecutionibus crevit, &c. *Hier. Ep.* 62.

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confidence or hope for the preſervation of Church and State, or for the reſtitution of things into a ſtable quiet; ſo it is only our hearty prayers, joined with a conſcientious obſervance of God's laws, whereby we can incline Providence to favour us. By them alone we may hope to ſave things from ſinking into diſorder, we may aſſuage the factions, we may defeat the machinations againſt the public welfare.

Conſt. Apoſt. viii. 13. ii. 57.

12. Seeing then we have ſo many good arguments and motives inducing to pray for kings, it is no wonder that, to back them, we may alſo allege the practice of the church, continually in all times performing this duty in its moſt ſacred offices, eſpecially in the celebration of the holy communion.

1 Tim. ii. 8. Polycarp. ad Phil. c. 12.

St. Paul indeed, when he ſaith, *I exhort firſt of all, that prayers be made*, doth chiefly impoſe this duty on Timothy, or ſuppoſeth it incumbent on the paſtors of the church, to take ſpecial care, that prayers be made for this purpoſe, and offered up in the church jointly by all Chriſtians: and accordingly the ancient Chriſtians, as Tertullian doth aſſure us, did *always pray for the emperors, that God would grant them a long life, a ſecure reign, a ſafe family, valiant armies, a faithful ſenate, a loyal people, a quiet world, and whatever they, as men or as emperors, could wiſh*[k]. Thus, addeth he, even for their perſecutors, and in the very pangs of their ſufferings, they did not fail to practiſe. Likewiſe of the Church in his time St. Chryſoſtom telleth us, that *all communicants did know how every day, both at even and morning, they did make ſupplication for all the world, and for the emperor, and for all that are in authority*[l].

[k] Precantes ſumus ſemper pro omnibus imperatoribus vitam illis prolixam, imperium ſecurum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, ſenatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, quæcunque hominis et Cæſaris vota ſunt. *Tert. Apol.* cap. 30.

Hoc agite, boni præſules, extorquete animam Deo ſupplicantem pro imperatore. *Ibid.*

[l] Καὶ τοῦτο ἴσασιν οἱ μύσται, πῶς καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν γίνεται καὶ ἐν ἑσπέρᾳ καὶ ἐν πρωΐᾳ· πῶς ὑπὲρ παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ βασιλέων, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ποιούμεθα τὴν δέησιν. *Chryſ. in* 1 Tim. ii. 1.

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And in the Greek liturgies (the compoſure whereof is fathered on St. Chryſoſtom) there are divers prayers interſperſed for the emperors, couched in terms very pregnant and reſpectful.

If the offices of the Roman Church, and of the churches truckling under it, in latter times, ſhall ſeem more defective or ſparing in this point of ſervice, the reaſon may be, for that a ſuperlative regard to the Solar or Pontifical authority (as Pope Innocent III. diſtinguiſhed) did obſcure their devotion for the Lunar or Regal Majeſty. But our Church hath been abundantly careful, that we ſhould in moſt ample manner diſcharge this duty; having in each of her holy offices directed us to pray for our King in expreſſions moſt full, hearty, and lively.

She hath indeed been charged as ſomewhat laviſh or over-liberal of her devotions in this caſe. But it is a good fault, and we little need fear over-doing in obſervance of a precept ſo very reaſonable, and ſo important; ſuppoſing that we have a due care to join our heart with the Church's words, and to the frequency of prayers for our Prince do confer a ſuitable fervency. If we be not dead, or merely formal, we can hardly be too copious in this kind of devotion; reiteration of words can do no harm, being accompanied with the renovation of our deſires. Our text itſelf will bear us out in ſuch a practice; the Apoſtle therein by variety of expreſſion appearing ſolicitous, that abundance of prayers for kings ſhould be offered in the Church, and no ſort of them omitted.

There are ſo many general inducements to this duty at all times; and there are beſide divers particular reaſons enforcing it now, in the preſent ſtate and poſture of things.

Times of trouble, of danger, of fear, of darkneſs and perplexity, of diſtraction and diſtreſs, of guilt and deſerved wrath, are moſt ſeaſonable for recourſe to the divine help and mercy in prayer[n]. Pſal. cxlv. 18. xviii. 6. lxxvii. 2. lxxxvi. 7. cxviii. 5. cxlii. 1. cvii. 6. Jam. v. 13. 2 Chr. vi. 36.

[n] Inops ſenatus auxilii humani ad deos populum ac vota vertit. *Liv.* iii. 7. v. 16.

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And are not ours ſuch? are they not much like to thoſe of which the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *They know not, neither will they underſtand; they walk on in darkneſs: all the foundations of the earth are out of courſe?* or like thoſe of which our Lord ſpake, when there was *upon the earth diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which were coming on the earth?*

Pſal. lxxxii. 5. Luke xxi. 25, 26. (2 Kings xix. 3.)

Are not the days gloomy, ſo that no human providence can ſee far, no wiſdom can deſcry the iſſue of things?

Is it not a very unſettled world, wherein all the public frames are ſhaken almoſt off the hinges, and the minds of men extremely diſcompoſed with various paſſions; with fear, ſuſpicion, anger, diſcontent, and impatience? How from diſſenſions in opinion do violent factions and feuds rage; the hearts of men boiling with fierce animoſities, and being exaſperated againſt one another, beyond any hopes or viſible means of reconcilement!

Pſal. cvii. 27.

Are not the fences of diſcipline caſt down? Is there any conſcience made of violating laws? Is not the dread of authority exceedingly abated, and all government overborne by unbridled licentiouſneſs?

How many adverſaries are there, *bearing ill will to our Sion!* How many turbulent, malicious, crafty ſpirits, eagerly bent, and watching for occaſion to ſubvert the Church, to diſturb the State, to introduce confuſion in all things! How many Edomites, who ſay of Jeruſalem, (both eccleſiaſtical and civil,) *Down with it, down with it even to the ground!*

Pſal. cxxix. 5. lxxxiii. 5. Pſ. cxxxvii. 7.

Have we not great reaſon to be fearful of God's juſt diſpleaſure, and that heavy judgments will be poured on us for our manifold heinous provocations and crying ſins; for the prodigious growth of atheiſm, infidelity, and profaneneſs; for the rife practice of all impieties, iniquities, and impurities, with moſt impudent boldneſs, or rather with outrageous inſolence; for the extreme diſſoluteneſs in manners; the groſs neglect or contempt of all duties; the great ſtupidity and coldneſs of people ge-

nerally as to all concerns of religion; for the want of religious awe toward God, of charity toward our neighbour, of reſpect to our ſuperiors, of ſobriety in our converſation; for our ingratitude for many great mercies, and incorrigibleneſs under many ſore chaſtiſements, our inſenſibleneſs of many plain warnings, loudly calling us to repentance? SERM. X.

Is not all the world about us in combuſtion, cruel wars raging every where, and Chriſtendom weltering in blood? and although at preſent, by God's mercy, we are free, who knows but that ſoon, by God's juſtice, the neighbouring flames may catch our houſes?

In fine, is not our caſe palpably ſuch, that for any good compoſure or reinſtatement of things in good order, for upholding truth and ſound doctrine, for reducing charity and peace, for reviving the ſpirit of piety, and bringing virtue again into requeſt; for preſerving State and Church from ruin; we can have no confidence or reaſonable hope, but in the good providence and merciful ſuccour of Almighty God; *beſide whom there is no Saviour;* who alone is *the hope of Iſrael, and Saviour thereof in time of trouble?* we now having great cauſe to pray with our Lord's diſciples in the ſtorm, *Lord, ſave us, we periſh.* Matt. viii. 25.

Iſa. xiii. 11. Hoſ. xiii. 4. Jer. xiv. 8.

Upon ſuch conſiderations, and others whereof I ſuppoſe you are ſufficiently apprehenſive, we now eſpecially are obliged earneſtly to pray for our King, that God in mercy would preſerve his royal perſon, and inſpire his mind with light, and endue his heart with grace, and in all things bleſs him to us, to be *a repairer of our breaches, and a reſtorer of paths to dwell in;* ſo that *under him we may lead a quiet life in all godlineſs and honeſty.* Iſa. lviii. 12.

I have done with the firſt duty, (*prayer for kings;*) upon which I have the rather ſo largely inſiſted, becauſe it is very ſeaſonable to our preſent condition.

II. The other (*thankſgiving*) I ſhall but touch, and need not perhaps to do more. For,

1. As to general inducements, they are the ſame, or very like to thoſe which are for prayer; it being plain, that whatever we are concerned to pray for, when we

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want it, that we are bound to thank God for, when he vouchſafeth to beſtow it. And if common charity ſhould diſpoſe us to reſent the good of princes with complacence; if their welfare be a public benefit; if ourſelves are intereſted in it, and partake great advantages thereby; if in equity and ingenuity we are bound to ſeek it; then, ſurely, we are much engaged to thank God, the bountiful donor of it, for his goodneſs in conferring it.

2. As for particular motives, ſuiting the preſent occaſion, I need not by information or impreſſion of them farther to ſtretch your patience; ſeeing you cannot be ignorant or inſenſible of the grand benefits by the divine goodneſs beſtowed on our King, and on ourſelves, which this day we are bound with all grateful acknowledgement to commemorate. Wherefore, inſtead of reciting trite ſtories, and urging obvious reaſons, (which a ſmall recollection will ſuggeſt to you,) I ſhall only requeſt you to join with me in the practice of the duty, and in acclamation of praiſe to God. Even ſo

1 Kings i. 48. Bleſſed be God, who hath given to us ſo gracious and benign a prince, (the experiments of whoſe clemency and goodneſs no hiſtory can parallel,) to ſit on the throne of his bleſſed father, and renowned anceſtors.

Pſal. xviii. 46. lxxxix. 22, 23. Bleſſed be God, who hath protected him in ſo many encounters, hath ſaved him from ſo many dangers and ſnares, hath delivered him from ſo great troubles.

Bleſſed be God, who in ſo wonderful a manner, by ſuch miraculous trains of providence, did reduce him to his country, and reinſtate him in the poſſeſſion of his rights;

Pſ. xcviii. 2. thereby vindicating his own juſt providence, *declaring his ſalvation, and openly ſhewing his righteouſneſs in the ſight of all people.*

Bleſſed be God, who in him and with him did reſtore to us our ancient good conſtitution of government, our laws and liberties, our peace and quiet; reſcuing us from lawleſs uſurpations and tyrannical yokes, from the inſultings of error and iniquity, from horrible diſtractions and confuſions.

Pſal. cxxvi. 1. Ever bleſſed be God, who hath *turned the captivity of*

Sion; hath raiſed our Church from the duſt, and reeſtabliſhed the ſound doctrine, the decent order, the wholeſome diſcipline thereof; hath reſtored true religion with its ſupports, advantages, and encouragements. SERM. X. (Iſ. xxx. 20.)

Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath granted us to continue theſe ſixteen years in the peaceable fruition of thoſe bleſſings.

Praiſed be God, who hath not caſt out our prayer, nor turned his mercy from us. Pſal. lxvi. 20.

Praiſed be God, who *hath turned our heavineſs into joy, hath put off our ſackcloth, and girded us with gladneſs.* Pſal. xxx. 11.

Let our mouth ſpeak the praiſe of the Lord; and let all fleſh bleſs his holy name for ever and ever. Pſal. cxlv. 21.

The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be our rock; and let the God of our ſalvation be exalted. Pſal. xviii. 46.

Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who only doeth wondrous things; and bleſſed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen. Pſal. lxxii. 18, 19.

Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, from everlaſting to everlaſting: and let all the people ſay, Amen. Praiſe ye the Lord. Pſal. cvi. 48. xli. 13. lxxxix. 52. lxviii. 34. 1 Chron. xvi. 8—36.

SERMON XI.

On Nov. 5, 1678.

ON THE GUNPOWDER-TREASON.

PSAL. lxiv. 9, 10.

And all men ſhall fear, and ſhall declare the work of God; for they ſhall wiſely conſider of his doing. The righteous ſhall be glad in the Lord, and ſhall truſt in him; and all the upright in heart ſhall glory.

SERM. XI.

IF we ſhould ſearch about for a caſe parallel to that which we do now commemorate, we ſhould, perhaps, hardly find one more patly ſuch, than is that which is implied in this Pſalm: and if we would know the duties incumbent on us in reference to ſuch an occaſion, we could ſcarce better learn them otherwhere than in our text.

With attention peruſing the Pſalm, we may therein obſerve, that its great Author was apprehenſive of a deſperate plot by a confederacy of wicked and ſpiteful enemies, with great craft and ſecrecy, contrived againſt his ſafety.

Pſal. lxiv. 5. *They*, ſaith he, *encourage themſelves in an evil matter: they commune of laying ſnares privily; they ſay, Who ſhall ſee them?* That for preventing the blow threatened by this deſign, (whereof he had ſome glimpſe, or ſome preſumption, grounded upon the knowledge of their implacable and active malice,) he doth implore divine protec-

Pſal. lxiv. 2. tion: *Hide me*, ſaith he, *from the ſecret counſel of the wicked, from the inſurrection of the workers of iniquity.* That he did confide in God's mercy and juſtice for the

Verſe 7. ſeaſonable defeating, for the fit avenging their machina-

tion: *God*, ſaith he, *ſhall ſhoot at them with an arrow; ſuddenly ſhall they be wounded.* That they ſhould themſelves become the detectors of their crime, and the inſtruments of the exemplary puniſhment due thereto: *They*, addeth he, *ſhall make their own tongue to fall upon themſelves: all that ſee them ſhall flee away.* SERM. XI. Verſe 8.

Such was the caſe; the which unto what paſſage in the hiſtory it doth relate, or whether it belongeth to any we have recorded, it may not be eaſy to determine. Expoſitors commonly do refer it to the deſigns of Saul upon David's life. But this ſeeming purely conjecture, not founded upon any expreſs words, or pregnant intimations in the text, I ſhall leave that inquiry in its own uncertainty. It ſufficeth to make good its pertinency, that there was ſuch a miſchievous conſpiracy, deeply projected, againſt David; (a very great perſonage, in whoſe ſafety the public ſtate of God's people was principally concerned; he being then king of Iſrael, at leaſt in deſignation, and therefore in the precedent Pſalm, endited in Saul's time, is ſo ſtyled;) from the peril whereof he by the ſpecial providence of God was reſcued, with the notable diſappointment and grievous confuſion of thoſe who managed it. The which caſe (at leaſt in kind, if not in degree) beareth a plain reſemblance to that which lieth before us. Pſal. lxiii. 11.

And the duties, which upon that occaſion are ſignified to concern people then, do no leſs now ſort to us; the which, as they lie couched in our text, are theſe: 1. *Wiſely* to *conſider God's doing*; 2. To *fear*; 3. To *declare God's work*; 4. To *be glad in the Lord*; 5. To *truſt in God*; 6. To *glory*. Of which the firſt three are repreſented as more generally concerning men; the others as appertaining more peculiarly to righteous and upright perſons.

Theſe duties it ſhall be my endeavour ſomewhat to explain and preſs, in a manner applicable to the preſent caſe. I call them duties; and to warrant the doing ſo, it is requiſite to conſider, that all theſe particulars may be underſtood in a double manner; either as declarative of event, or as directive of practice upon ſuch emergencies.

SERM. XI.

When God doth ſo interpoſe his hand, as ſignally to check and confound miſchievous enterpriſes, it will be apt to ſtir up in the minds of men an apprehenſion of God's ſpecial providence, to ſtrike into their hearts a dread of his power and juſtice, to wring from their mouths ſuitable declarations and acknowledgments; and particularly then good men will be affected with pious joy; they will be encouraged to confide in God, they will be moved to glory, or to expreſs a triumphant ſatisfaction in God's proceedings. Theſe events naturally do reſult from ſuch providential occurrences; for production of theſe events ſuch occurrences are purpoſely deſigned; and accordingly (where men are not by profane opinions or affections much indiſpoſed) they do commonly follow.

But yet they are not propoſed ſimply as events, but alſo as matters of duty: for men are obliged readily to admit ſuch impreſſions upon their minds, hearts, and lives, from the ſpecial works of Providence; they are bound not to croſs thoſe natural tendencies, not to fruſtrate thoſe wiſe intents of God, aiming at the production of ſuch good diſpoſitions and good practices: whence if thoſe effects do not ariſe, as often notoriouſly they do not in ſome perſons, men thereby do incur much guilt and blame.

It is indeed ordinary to repreſent matter of duty in this way, expreſſing thoſe practices conſequent in effect, which in obligation ſhould follow, according to God's purpoſe, and the nature of cauſes ordered by him. As when, for inſtance, God in the law had preſcribed duty, and threatened ſore puniſhment on the diſobedient, it is ſubjoined, *And all the people ſhall hear, and fear, and do no more preſumptuouſly*: the meaning is, that ſuch exemplary puniſhment is in its nature apt, and its deſign tendeth to produce ſuch effects, although not ever, queſtionleſs, with due ſucceſs, ſo as to prevent all tranſgreſſion of thoſe laws. So alſo, *When*, ſaith the Prophet, *thy judgments are in the land, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteouſneſs*: the ſenſe is, that divine judgments in themſelves are inſtructive of duty, it is their drift to inform men therein, and men ought to learn that leſſon from

Deut. xvii. 13. xiii. 11. xix. 20.

Iſa. xxvi. 9.

them; although in effect divers there be, whom no judgments can make wiſer or better; ſuch as thoſe of whom in the ſame Prophet it is ſaid, *The people turneth not unto him that ſmiteth them;* and in another, *In vain have I ſmitten your children, they received no correction.* As therefore frequently otherwhere, ſo alſo here this kind of expreſſion may be taken chiefly to import duty. To begin then with the firſt of theſe duties. SERM. XI. Iſa. ix. 13. Jer. ii. 30. v. 3. Neh. ix. 29.

I. We are upon ſuch occaſions obliged *wiſely to conſider* (or, as the Greek rendereth it, συνιέναι, *to underſtand*, or *to perceive*, as our old tranſlation hath it) *God's doing.* This I put in the firſt place, as previous in nature, and influential upon the reſt: whence (although in the Hebrew it be knit to the reſt, as they all are to one another, by the conjunctive particle *ve, and*, yet) we do tranſlate it caſually, *For they ſhall wiſely conſider, for they ſhall perceive;* becauſe indeed without duly conſidering and rightly underſtanding ſuch occurrences to proceed from God, none of the other acts can or will be performed: attentive conſideration is needful to beget knowledge and perſuaſion; theſe to breed affection and practice. ומעשהו השכילו συνῆκαν τὰ ποιήματα.

There are many who, in ſuch caſes, are nowiſe apprehenſive of God's ſpecial providence, or affected with it; becauſe they do not conſider, or do not conſider wiſely and intelligently.

Some are very inobſervant and careleſs in regard to things of this nature; ſo drowſy and heedleſs, as not to attend to whatever paſſeth, or to mind what God acteth in the world: ſuch as thoſe of whom the Prophet ſaith, *The harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feaſts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands:* that is, their minds are ſo amuſed by wanton divertiſements, their hearts are ſo immerſed in ſenſual enjoyments, as nowiſe to obſerve the moſt notable occurrences of Providence. Iſa. v. 12. Pſal. xxviii. 5. x. 4.

Others (although they do ken and regard what is done, as matter of news, or ſtory, entertaining curioſity and talk: yet) out of ſloth or ſtupidity do little conſider it, or ſtudy whence it ſpringeth; contenting themſelves with

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none, or with any ſuperficial account which fancy or appearance ſuggeſteth: like beaſts they do take in things obvious to their ſenſe, and perhaps ſtand gazing on them; but do not make any careful reflection, or inquiry into their original cauſes and reaſons; taking (as a dog, when he biteth the ſtone flung at him, or as a child that is angry with the log he falleth on) whatever appeareth next to be the principal cauſe: ſuch as the Pſalmiſt again toucheth, when he ſaith, *A brutiſh man knoweth not, neither doth a fool underſtand this:* and as he doth acknowledge himſelf on one occaſion to have been; *So fooliſh was I, and ignorant; I was as a beaſt before thee.*

Pſal. xcii. 6.

Pſal. lxxiii. 22.

Others pretend to conſider much, and ſeem very inquiſitive; yet (being miſguided by vain prejudices or foul affections) do not conſider wiſely, or well underſtand theſe matters; the reſult of their care and ſtudy about them being to father them on wrong cauſes, aſcribing them to the mere conduct and agency of viſible cauſes, hurried by a neceſſary ſwinge, or rolling on by a caſual fluctuation of things; not deſcrying God's hand in them, but profanely diſcarding and diſclaiming it: ſuch as thoſe in the Pſalms, who ſo reflected on Providence as to ſay, *How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Moſt High? The Lord doth not ſee, neither doth the God of Jacob regard it:* ſuch as hath been the brood of Epicurean and profane conſiderers in all times, who have earneſtly plodded, and ſtrained their wits, to exclude God from any inſpection or influence upon our affairs.

Pſal. lxxiii. 11. xciv. 7. x. 11.

Some indeed there have been ſo very dull and ſtupid, or ſo perverſe and profane, as not to diſcern God's hand, when it was *made bare, raiſed up,* and *ſtretched out* in the achievement of moſt prodigious works; not to read Providence, when ſet forth in the largeſt and faireſt print: ſuch as thoſe of whom it is ſaid in the Pſalm, [a] *Our fathers underſtood not thy wonders in Egypt;* and thoſe of whom it is obſerved in the Goſpel, [b] *Though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not:* ſuch as the mutinous people, who, although they beheld [c] *the earth*

Iſa. lii. 10. Exod. xiv. 8. Deut. xxvi. 8. Iſa. xxvi. 11. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee, &c.

[a] Pſal. cvi. 7.

[b] Joh. xii. 37. [c] Num. xvi. 32. 35. 41.

ſwallowing up Korah with his complices, and *a fire from the Lord conſuming the men that offered incenſe*; yet preſently did fall a charging Moſes and Aaron, ſaying, *Ye have killed the people of the Lord.* No wonder then, if many do not perceive the ſame hand, when it is wrapped up in a complication with inferior cauſes; when it is not lifted up ſo high, or ſo far extended in miraculous performances. SERM. XI.

The ſpecial providence of God in events here effected or ordered by him, is indeed commonly not diſcernible without good judgment and great care; it is not commonly impreſſed upon events in characters ſo big and clear, as to be legible to every eye, or to any eye not endued with a ſharp perſpicacy, not applying an induſtrious heedfulneſs: the tracts thereof are too fine and ſubtile to be deſcried by a dim ſight, with a tranſient glance, or upon a groſs view: it is ſeldom ſo very conſpicuous, that perſons incredulous, or any-wiſe indiſpoſed to admit it, can eaſily be convinced thereof, or conſtrained to acknowledge it: it is often (upon many accounts, from many cauſes) very obſcure, and not eaſily diſcernible to the moſt ſagacious, moſt watchful, moſt willing obſervers. For, the inſtruments of Providence being free agents, acting with unaccountable variety, nothing can happen which may not be imputed to them, with ſome colourable pretence. Divine and human influences are ſo twiſted and knit together, that it is hard to ſever them. The manner of divine efficacy is ſo very ſoft and gentle, that we cannot eaſily trace its footſteps. God deſigneth not commonly to exert his hand in a notorious way, but often purpoſely doth conceal it. Whereas alſo it is not fit to charge upon God's ſpecial hand of providence any event, wherein ſpecial ends of wiſdom or goodneſs do not ſhine; it is often hard to diſcover ſuch ends, which uſually are wrapped in perplexities: becauſe God acteth variouſly, (according to circumſtances of things, and the diſpoſition, capacity, or ſtate of objects,) ſo as to do the ſame thing for different ends, and different things for the ſame end: becauſe there are different ends, unto which

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Providence in various order and meaſure hath regard, which our ſhort and narrow proſpect cannot reach: becauſe God, in proſecution of his ends, is not wont to proceed in the moſt direct and compendious way; but windeth about in a large circuit, enfolding many concurrent and ſubordinate deſigns: becauſe the expediency of things to be permitted or performed doth not conſiſt in ſingle acts or events, but in many conſpiring to one common end: becauſe we cannot apprehend the conſequences, nor balance the conveniences of things in order to good ends: becauſe we are apt to meaſure things by their congruity to our opinions, expectations, and affections: becauſe many proceedings of God depend upon grounds inacceſſible to our apprehenſion; ſuch as his own ſecret decrees, the knowledge of men's thoughts, cloſe purpoſes, clandeſtine deſigns, true qualifications and merits; his preſcience of contingent events, and what the reſult will be from the combination of numberleſs cauſes: becauſe ſometimes he doth act in methods of wiſdom, and by rules of juſtice, ſurpaſſing our capacity to know, either from the finiteneſs of our nature, or the feebleneſs of our reaſon, or the meanneſs of our ſtate and circumſtances here: becauſe all the divine adminiſtration of affairs hath no complete determination or final iſſue here; that being reſerved to the great day of reckoning and judgment. It is farther alſo expedient that many occurrences ſhould be puzzling to us, to quaſh our preſumption, to exerciſe our faith, to quicken our induſtry, to engage us upon adoring that wiſdom which we cannot comprehend. Upon ſuch accounts, for ſuch cauſes, (which time will not give me leave to explain and exemplify,) the ſpecial providence of God is often cloudy, is ſeldom ſo clear, that without great heed and conſideration we can perceive it. But however to do ſo is plainly our duty; and therefore poſſible.

For our reaſon was not given us to be idle upon ſo important occaſions; or that we ſhould be as brute ſpectators of what God doeth. He ſurely in the governance of his nobleſt creature here diſcovereth his being, and diſplayeth

his attributes: we therefore carefully ſhould obſerve it. SERM. XI.
He thereby (and no otherwiſe in a public way) doth continually *ſpeak*, and ſignify to us his mind: and fit it is, that we his ſubjects ſhould hear, ſhould attend to the leaſt intimations of his pleaſure. To him thence glory ſhould accrue, the which who but we can render? and that we may render it, we muſt know the grounds of it. In fine, for the ſupport of God's kingdom, for upholding the reverence due to his adminiſtration of juſtice among us, it is requiſite, that by apparent diſpenſation of recompences duty ſhould be encouraged, and diſobedience checked: very fooliſh therefore we muſt be, if we regard not ſuch diſpenſations. Pſal. l. 1. lx. 6. lxii. 11.

So reaſon dictateth, and holy Scripture more plainly declareth our obligation to conſider and perceive God's doings. To do ſo is recommended to us as a ſingular point of wiſdom: *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, they ſhall underſtand the lovingkindneſs of the Lord. Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exerciſe lovingkindneſs, judgment, and righteouſneſs in the earth. Who is wiſe? and he ſhall underſtand theſe things; prudent? and he ſhall know them. For the ways of the Lord are right*, &c. We are vehemently provoked thereto: *Underſtand, ye brutiſh among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wiſe?* They are reproved for neglect and defailance, *who do not regard the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hand.* The not diſcerning Providence is reproached as a piece of ſhameful folly; *A brutiſh man knoweth not, neither doth a fool underſtand:* and of woful pravity; [a] *O ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky; but how is it that ye cannot diſcern this time?* To contemplate and ſtudy Providence is the practice of good men. *I will meditate on all thy works*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, chiefly reſpecting works of this kind: and, *The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that have pleaſure therein.* It is a fit matter of devotion, warranted by the practice of good men, to implore God's manifeſtation of his juſtice and power this way. *O Lord God, to whom*

Pſ. cvii. 43. Jer. ix. 24. Hoſ. xiv. 9. Pſal. xciv. 8. Pſal. xxviii. 5. x. 4. Iſa. v. 12. Pſal. xcii. 6. (Iſa. xxvi. 11.)

[a] Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee. [a] Luke xii. 56. Matt. xvi. 3. Pſal. lxxvii. 12. cxliii. 5. Pſal. cxi. 2. xciv. 1, 2.

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vengeance belongeth, ſhew thyſelf; lift up thyſelf, thou Judge of the earth. It is God's manner hereby to notify himſelf. *The Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth.* He for this very purpoſe doth interpoſe his hand; *that men may know it is his hand, and that the Lord hath done it;* that, as it is in Eſay, *they may ſee, and know, and conſider, and underſtand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Iſrael hath created it.* [a] He manageth things, ſo that men may be brought to know, may be induced to acknowledge his authority, and his equity in the management thereof; that *they may know that he, whoſe name is Jehovah, is the moſt High over all the earth:* that *they may ſay, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily there is a God that judgeth the earth.* In fine, the knowledge of God's ſpecial providence is frequently repreſented as a mean of nouriſhing our faith and hope in him, as a ground of thankfulneſs and praiſe to him, as an incentive of the beſt affections (of holy joy, and humble fear, and hearty love) toward him: wherefore we ought to ſeek it, and we may attain it.

Pſal. ix. 16.
Pſal. cix. 27.
Iſa. xli. 20.
(Ezek. vii. 27.)
Pſ. lix. 13.
lxxxiii. 18.
lxvii. 2.
Pſ. lviii. 11.

There are conſequently ſome diſtinctive marks, or characters, by which we may perceive God's hand: and ſuch may theſe be which follow, (drawn from the ſpecial nature, manner, adjuncts, and conſequences of events:) upon which may be grounded rules declarative of ſpecial providence, ſuch as commonly will hold, although ſometimes they may admit exceptions, and ſhould be warily applied.

1. The wonderful ſtrangeneſs of events, compared with the ordinary courſe of things, or the natural influence of cauſes; when effects are performed by no viſible means, or by means diſproportionate, unſuitable, repugnant to the effect. Sometimes great exploits are achieved, mighty forces are diſcomfited, huge ſtructures are demoliſhed, deſigns backed with all advantages of wit and ſtrength are confounded, none knows how, by no conſiderable means

[a] God thereby doth ſupport and encourage good men.
He doth thereby convince and confound ill men. Pſal. ix. 19, 20.
He thereby doth inſtruct all men. Iſa. xxvi. 9.

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that appear; nature riſing up in arms againſt them; panic fears ſeizing on the abettors of them; diſſenſions and treacheries ſpringing up among the actors; ſudden deaths ſnatching away the principal inſtruments of them. As, when *the ſtars in their courſe fought againſt Siſera:* when the winds and ſkies became auxiliaries to Theodoſius: when *the Lord thundered with a great thunder upon the Philiſtines, and diſcomfited them, and they were ſmitten before Iſrael:* when *the Lord made the hoſt of Syrians to hear a noiſe of chariots, of horſes, of a great hoſt;*—whence *they aroſe and fled:* when *the children of Ammon and Moab ſtood up againſt the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to ſlay and deſtroy them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to deſtroy another:* when *the angel of the Lord went forth and ſmote in the camp of the Aſſyrians* 185000 *men; and when they aroſe early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpſes:* when the mighty power of Antiochus was, as it is ſaid, to be *broken without hands:* and when, as it is foretold, *a ſtone cut out of the mountain without hands ſhould break in pieces the iron, the braſs, the clay, the ſilver, and the gold.* Such events do ſpeak God to be their cauſe, by his inviſible efficacy ſupplying the defect of apparent means.

Judg. v. 20. Aug. de Civ. Dei, v. 26. 1 Sam. vii. 10. 2 Sam. xxii. 14, 15. 2 Kings vii. 6. Pſal. liii. 5. xlviii. 6. 2 Chr. xx. 23. 2 Kings xix. 35. Dan. viii. 25. ii. 45.

[b] So likewiſe, when by weak forces great feats are accompliſhed, and impotency triumpheth over might; when, as the Prophet ſaith, *the captives of the mighty are taken away, and the prey of the terrible is delivered:* when *one man,* as is promiſed, *doth chaſe a thouſand, and two put ten thouſand to flight:* when a * ſtripling, furniſhed only with faith and a pebble, ſhall knock down a monſtrous giant, armed with a helmet of braſs and a coat of mail, with a huge target, ſword, and ſpear: when ſucceſſes arrive like thoſe recorded in Scripture under the conduct of Joſhua, Gideon, Jonathan, Aſa, Jehoſaphat; wherein very ſmall forces by uncouth means did ſubdue formidable powers: this doth argue that God doth interpoſe; *with*

Iſa. xlix. 25. Joſh. xxiii. 10. Lev. xxvi. 8. Deut. xxxii. 30. * 1 Sam. xvii. v. 40. Judg. vii. 7. 1 Sam. xiv. 6. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. xx. 12, 17. 2 Chron. xiv. 11.

[b] Vid. Artabani Orat. apud Herod. Polymn. pag. 246. Hom. Il. v. ver. 688.

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whom, as it is ſaid, *it is all one to ſave by many, or b*
and thoſe that have no power; whoſe *power is perfe*
1 Sam. xiv. 6. *weakneſs*; who *breaketh the arm of the wicked*, and
2 Cor. xii. 9. *eneth the ſtrength of the mighty*, and *delivereth th*
Job xii. 21. *from him that is too ſtrong for him.*
xxxviii. 15. Pſ. x. 15. xxxvii. 17. xxxv. 10. (Pſ. lxxvi. 5.

[a] Alſo, when great policy and craft do effect nothi
are blaſted of themſelves, or baffled by ſimplicity:
cunningly-laid deſigns are ſoon thwarted and overt
[a] Hom. Od. ψ. ver. 11. when moſt perſpicacious and profound counſellor
blinded, or ſo infatuated, as to miſtake in plain c
2 Sam. xv. 31. overſee things moſt obvious and palpable: when p
Ruffinus, S. Paul, d'Ancre, de Luna, &c. malicious, ſubtile, treacherous politicians (ſuch a
melech, Achitophel, Haman, Sejanus, Stilico, Borgi
many like occurring in ſtory) are not only ſuppla
their wicked contrivances, but diſmally chaſtiſed for
the occurrences do more than inſinuate divine wiſd
intervene, countermining and confounding ſuch c

Iſa. xliv. 25. Job v. 12, 13. (Pſ. xxxiii. 10.) βυλὰς πολυπλόκων ἐξίστησιν. For he it is, who, as the Scripture telleth us, *mak*
diviners mad; turneth wiſe men backward, and make
knowledge fooliſh; diſappointeth the devices of the
ſo that their hands cannot perform their enterpriſe;
the wiſe in their own craftineſs, and turneth down th
ſel of the froward headlong.

Whenever a juſt cauſe or honeſt deſign, witho
ſupport or ſuccour of worldly means, (without
rity, power, wit, learning, eloquence,) doth aga
oppoſition of violence and art prevail; this ſignifie
to yield a ſpecial countenance and aid thereto, w

1 Cor. i. 27, 28. depreſs human pride, and advance his own glor
choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound th
and the weak things of the world to confound the
that are mighty; and baſe things of the world, and
which are deſpiſed, and things that are not, to b
nought things that are: (that are with us in moſt
and eſteem.)

Again, when plots, with extreme caution and
contrived in darkneſs, are by improbable means, b
countable accidents diſcloſed and brought to light

Eccleſ. x. 20. *of the air*, as the Wiſe Man ſpeaketh, *telling the*

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the ſtones in the wall, as it is in the Prophet, *crying out* Treaſon. The King cannot ſleep: to divert him the chronicle is called for; Mordecai's ſervice is there pitched on; an inquiry is made concerning his recompence; honour is decreed him; ſo doth Haman's cruel device come out. Pity ſeizeth on a pitileſs heart toward one among a huge number of innocents devoted to ſlaughter: that he may be ſaved, a letter muſt be ſent: in that, words inſerted ſuggeſting the manner of execution; that carried to the wiſe King, who preſently ſmelleth it out: ſo this day's plot was diſcovered. Such events, whence can they well proceed, but from the all-piercing and ever watchful care of him, *whoſe eyes,* as Elihu ſaid, *are upon the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his goings? There is no darkneſs nor ſhadow of death, where the workers of iniquity ſhall hide themſelves:* for *hell is naked before him, and deſtruction hath no covering.*

Hab. ii. 11. (Pſ. cxxi. 4.) Job xxxiv. 21, 22. Job xxvi. 6. Pſ. cxxxii. 2, &c. Heb. iv. 13.

Alſo, when ill men by their perverſe wilineſs do notably befool and enſnare themſelves, laying trains to blow up their own deſigns, involving themſelves in that ruin and miſchief into which they ſtudied to draw others; as when Saul, expoſing David's life to hazard, increaſeth his honour; when the Perſian nobles, incenſing the king againſt Daniel, do occaſion his growth in favour, with their own deſtruction; when Haman, by contriving to deſtroy God's people, doth advance them, and rearing a gallows for Mordecai, doth prepare it for himſelf: when it happeneth according to thoſe paſſages in the Pſalms, *the wicked are taken in the devices that they imagined; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken: He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made: His miſchief ſhall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings ſhall come upon his own pate:* theſe are pregnant evidences of God's juſt and wiſe providence; for *the Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth; the wicked is ſnared in the work of his own hand.*

Amos ix. 2. 1 Sam. xviii. 25. Dan. vi. 24. Pſal. x. 2. ix. 15. xxxv. 8. cxl. 5. Pſal. vii. 15. lvii. 6. Pſal. vii. 16. v. 10. Pſal. ix. 16.

All ſuch occurrences, containing in them ſomewhat, if not downrightly miraculous, yet very admirable, in like manner deflecting from the ſtream of human affairs, as

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miracles do ſurmount the courſe of nature, moſt reaſonably may, moſt juſtly ſhould, be aſcribed to the ſpecial operation of him, who *only doeth wonderful things.*

Pſ. lxxii. 18. lxxxvi. 10.

2. Another character of ſpecial Providence is, the ſeaſonableneſs and ſuddenneſs of events. When that, which in itſelf is not ordinary, nor could well be expected, doth fall out happily, in the nick of an exigency, for the relief of innocence, the encouragement of goodneſs, the ſupport of a good cauſe, the furtherance of any good purpoſe; (ſo that there is occaſion to acknowledge with the Prophet, *Thou didſt terrible things, that we looked not for;*) this is a ſhrewd indication, that God's hand is then concerned; not only the event being notable, but the connection thereof with circumſtances of need being more admirable.

Iſa. lxiv. 3.

Thus in time of diſtreſs and deſpondency, when a man is utterly forlorn, and deſtitute of all viſible relief, when, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh, *refuge faileth him, and no man careth for his ſoul:* if then εὔκαιρος βοήθεια, *an opportune ſuccour* doth arrive; he is then unreaſonable and ingrateful, if he doth not avow a ſpecial Providence, and thankfully aſcribe that event unto him who is *our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble*; [a] *a ſtrength to the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs, a refuge from the ſtorm, a ſhadow from the heat*; [b] *the hope of Iſrael, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble.* This is that, for which, in the [c] 107th Pſalm, the divine goodneſs is ſo magnificently celebrated; this is the burden of that pathetical rapture, wherein we by repeated wiſhes and exhortations are inſtigated to bleſs God; his wonderfully relieving the children of men in their need and diſtreſs: this is that, which God himſelf in the Prophet repreſenteth as a moſt ſatisfactory demonſtration of his providence. *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forſake them: I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midſt of the valleys,* &c. *That they may ſee, and know, and conſider, and underſtand to-*

(Pſal. xliv. 25. cviii. 12.) Heb. iv. 16. Pſal. cxlii. 4. Pſal. xlvi. 1. ix. 9. xliv. 24. xxxvii. 39. xxvii. 5. lxix. 14. xviii. 6. [a] Iſa. xxv. 4. xxxiii. 2. [b] Jer. xiv. 8. Job xxxiii. 18. [c] Pſal. cvii. 8. 15. 21. 31. Iſa. xli. 17, &c.

gether, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Iſrael hath created it. SERM. XI.

So alſo, when peſtilent enterpriſes, managed by cloſe fraud, or by impetuous violence, are brought to a head, and come near to the point of being executed; the ſudden detection or ſeaſonable obſtruction of them do argue the ever vigilant eye and the all-powerful hand to be engaged: God ever doth ſee thoſe deceitful workers of iniquity, laying their miſchief in the dark; he is always preſent at their cabals and clandeſtine meetings, wherein they brood upon it. He often doth ſuffer it to grow on to a pitch of maturity, till it be thoroughly formed, till it be ready to be hatched, and break forth in its miſchievous effects; then in a trice he ſnappeth and cruſheth it to nothing. God beholdeth violent men ſetting out in their unjuſt attempts, he letteth them proceed on in a full career, until they reach the edge of their deſign; then inſtantly he checketh, putteth in a ſpoke, he ſtoppeth, he tumbleth them down, or turneth them backward. Thus was Haman's plot daſhed, Eſth. iii. when he had procured a royal decree, when he had fixed a time, when he had iſſued forth letters to deſtroy God's people. Thus was Pharaoh overwhelmed, when he had Exod. xiv. juſt overtaken the children of Iſrael. Thus were the deſigns of Abimelech, of Abſalom, of Adonijah, of Sanballat nipped. Thus when Sennacherib with an unmatchable hoſt had encamped againſt Jeruſalem, and had to appearance ſwallowed it, God did *put a hook into his noſe, and turned him back into his own land.* Thus when Antiochus was marching on furiouſly to accompliſh his threat of turning Jeruſalem into a charnel, a noiſome diſeaſe did intercept his progreſs. Thus when the profane Caligula did mean to diſcharge his bloody rage on the Jews, for refuſing to worſhip him, a domeſtic ſword did preſently give vent to his revengeful breath. Thus alſo, when Julian had by his policy and authority projected to overthrow our religion, his plot ſoon was quaſhed, and his life ſnapped away by an unknown hand. Thus, *whenever the enemy doth come in like a flood,* (threatening immediately to overflow and overturn all things,) *the Spirit of the Lord doth lift up a ſtandard againſt him;* that is, God's

2 Kings xix. 28. 2 Mac. ix. 4. Joſeph. xviii. 12. Chryſoſt. in Babyl. Orat. 2. Naz. Orat. 4. Iſa. lix. 19.

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ſecret efficacy doth ſuddenly reſtrain and repreſs his outrage. This uſually is the method of Divine providence. God could prevent the [c] beginnings of wicked deſigns; he could ſupplant them in their firſt onſets; he could any where ſufflaminate and ſubvert them: but he rather winketh for a time, and ſuffereth the deſigners to go on, till they are [d] mounted to the top of confidence, and good people are caſt on the brink of ruin; then [e] ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, ſurprifingly, unexpectedly he ſtriketh in with effectual ſuccour; ſo declaring how vain the preſumption is of impious undertakers; how needful and ſure his protection is over innocent people; how much reaſon the one hath to dread him, and the other to confide in him. Then is God ſeen, then his care and power will be acknowledged, when he ſnatcheth us from the jaws of danger, when *our ſoul doth eſcape as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowler.*

(Job xxxviii. 11.)

Pſal. cxxiv. 7.

3. Another character of ſpecial Providence is, the great utility and beneficialneſs of occurrences, eſpecially in regard to the public ſtate of things, and to great perſonages, in whoſe welfare the public is much concerned. To entitle every petty chance that arriveth to ſpecial Providence, may ſignify lightneſs; to father on God the miſchiefs iſſuing from our ſin and folly, may ſavour of profaneneſs: but to aſcribe every [f] grand and beneficial event unto his good hand, hath ever been reputed wiſdom and juſtice. [g] *It hath been,* ſaith Balbus in Cicero, *a common opinion among the ancients, that whatever did bring great benefit to mankind, was never done without divine goodneſs toward men.* And well might they deem it ſo, ſeeing to do ſo is moſt agreeable to his nature, and appertaining to his charge, and may appear to be ſo by good argumentation *a priori.* For, that God doth govern our affairs, may be deduced from his eſſential attributes; and,

[c] Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐκ προοιμίων, μηδὲ ἐνδίως, ἵνα μὴ αὐτῷ ταῦτα, &c. Vid. *Chryſ. ad Olymp.*

[d] Ὅταν κορυφωθῇ, ὅταν αὐξηθῇ, &c. *Ibid.*

[e] Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit.

[f] Magna dii curant, parva negligunt. *Cic.* ii. *de Nat. Deor.*

[g] Quicquid magnam utilitatem generi adferret humano, id non ſine divina bonitate erga homines fieri arbitrabantur. *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* lib. ii.

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conſequently, that he doth in eſpecial manner order theſe things, which are the moſt proper and worthy objects of his governance. God indeed doth not diſregard any thing; he watcheth over the leaſt things by his general and ordinary providence; ſo that nothing in nature may deviate from its courſe, or tranſgreſs the bounds preſcribed to it. He thereby *clotheth the graſs of the field; he provideth for the raven his food, and the young lions ſeek their meat from him:* without his care [a] *a ſparrow doth not fall to the ground;* by it, *all the hairs of our head are numbered.* But his more ſpecial hand of providence is chiefly employed in managing affairs of great moment and benefit to mankind; and peculiarly thoſe which concern his people, who do profeſs to worſhip and ſerve him; whoſe welfare he tendereth with more than ordinary care and affection. He therefore hath a main ſtroke in all revolutions and changes of ſtate: he preſideth in all great counſels and undertakings; in the waging of war, in the ſettlement of peace; in the diſpenſation of victory and good ſucceſs. He is peculiarly intereſted in the protection of princes, the chief *miniſters of his kingdom;* and in preſervation of his people, the choice object of his care, from violent invaſions, and treacherous ſurpriſes; ſo as to prevent diſaſters incident, or to deliver from them. *It is he that,* as the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *doth give ſalvation unto kings; who deliver-eth David his ſervant from the hurtful ſword.* It is he that continually *keepeth Iſrael without ever ſleeping, or ſlumbering;* who *is the hope of Iſrael, and the Saviour thereof;* who *is in the midſt of her, that ſhe ſhall not be moved;* who hath declared, that *he will help her, and that right early;* that *he will not caſt off his people, nor forſake his inheritance;* that *no weapon formed againſt* his Church *ſhall proſper;* that *ſalvation belongeth to the Lord, and his bleſſing is upon his people.* When therefore any remarkable event, highly conducing to the public good of Church and State, (ſupporting them in a good condition, or reſcuing them from imminent danger,) doth appear, it is moſt reaſonable and moſt juſt, to aſcribe the accompliſhment thereof to God's hand. When any pernicious enter-

Matt. vi. 30. Pſ. civ. 14. cxlvii. 9. Job xxxviii. 39. Pſal. civ. 21. [a] Matt. x. 29, 30.

Dan. iv. 25. Pſal. lxxv. 7. Pſal. xlvi. 9. Prov. xxi. 31. 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Wiſd. vi. 4.

Pſal. cxliv. 10. Eccleſ. x. 20. Pſ. xviii. 50. xxi. 1. xxxiii. 16. Pſal. cxxi. 4. Jer. xiv. 8. Pſal. xlvi. 5. Pſal. xciv. 14.

Iſa. liv. 17. Pſal. iii. 8.

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priſe, levelled againſt the ſafety of prince and people, is diſappointed, it is fit we ſhould profeſs and ſay, *The righteous Lord hath hewn the ſnares of the ungodly in pieces.*

Pſ. cxxix. 4. (O. T.)

4. Another like mark of ſpecial providence is, the righteouſneſs of the caſe, or the advantage ſpringing from events unto the maintenance of right, the vindication of innocence, the defence of truth, the encouragement of piety and virtue. God naturally is the judge of right, the guardian of innocence, the patron of truth, and promoter of goodneſs. *The Lord is a refuge to the oppreſſed: He is a father of the fatherleſs, and a judge of the widow: He will maintain the cauſe of the afflicted, and the right of the poor:* [a] *He executeth righteouſneſs, and judgment for all that are oppreſſed: He bleſſeth the righteous, and compaſſeth him with favour as with a ſhield: He preſerveth the ſouls of the righteous, and delivereth them out of the hand of the ungodly: All his paths are mercy and truth, unto ſuch as keep his covenant and his teſtimonies.* Whenever therefore right is oppreſſed, or perilouſly invaded; when innocence is groſsly abuſed, or ſorely beſet; when piety is fiercely oppoſed, or cunningly undermined; when good men for the profeſſion of truth, or the practice of virtue, are perſecuted, or grievouſly threatened with miſchief; then may we preſume that God is not unconcerned, nor will prove backward to reach forth his ſuccour. And when accordingly we find that ſignal aid or deliverance do then arrive; it is moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that God particularly hath engaged himſelf, and exerted his power in their behalf. For, ſeeing it is his proper and peculiar work, ſeeing it moſt becometh and behoveth him to appear in ſuch caſes, affording his helpful countenance; when he doeth it, we ſhould be ready to acknowledge it. In ſuch a caſe, *The hand of the Lord ſhall be known toward his ſervants, and his indignation toward his enemies,* ſaith the Prophet.

Pſal. ix. 9. lxviii. 5. x. 14. Job xxxvi. 15. Pſ. cxl. 12. [a] Pſ. ciii. 6. ix. 8. Pſ. v. 12. xcvii. 10. xxxvii. 12. xxv. 10. cxlvi. 6.

Iſa. lxvi. 14.

5. Another character is, the correſpondence of events to the prayers and deſires of good men. For ſeeing it is the duty and conſtant practice of good men, in all exigencies to implore God's help; ſeeing ſuch prayers have,

Pſ. lxix. 13. cii. 1, 2. cxl. 6. lx. 10. lvi. 1.

James telleth us, a mighty energy, it being God's ty, by them to be moved to impart his powerful ice; ſeeing God moſt plainly and frequently hath ed, and obliged himſelf by promiſe, that he will hem, ſo as to perform whatever is expedient in behalf; ſeeing we have many notable experiments ed in Scripture (as thoſe of Aſa, Jehoſaphat, Heze- Elias, Daniel, and the like) of prayers bringing wonderful effects from heaven, with which the mies of all times and the daily experience of good o conſpire[h]; ſeeing the preſumption of ſuch ef- is the main ground and encouragement of devo- we have great reaſon, whenever events are anſwer- ſuch prayers, to aſcribe the performance of them l's hand: great reaſon we have in ſuch caſes to cry ith David, *Now know I that the Lord ſaveth his ed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the ſtrength of his right hand:* juſt cauſe have we, ac- g to his pattern, thankfully to acknowledge God's in anſwering our petitions; *The king*, ſaid he, *ſhall thy ſtrength, O Lord, and in thy ſalvation how ſhall he rejoice! For thou haſt given him his heart's and haſt not withholden the requeſts of his lips.* gain, the proceedings of God (eſpecially in way of ent, or of diſpenſing rewards and puniſhments) diſ- heir original by their kind and countenance, which do bear a near reſemblance, or ſome ſignificant cor- dence, to the actions upon which they are grounded. *ments*, ſaith a Father, *are the forced offſprings of faults:* and anſwerably, rewards are the children d deeds: and God, who formeth both, doth com- order it ſo, that the children in their complexion atures ſhall reſemble their parents. So that the of men ſhall often be legible in the recompences

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Jam. v. 16. Pſ. lvi. 9. Pſ. xxxiv. 15. xci. 15. cxlv. 18. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. xx. 9. xxxii. 20. 2 Kings xix. 15. 1 Kings xvii. 1, &c. Pſ. xx. 6. Pſ. xxi 1, 2. Pſ. xxx. 2. lxvi. 17. cxviii. 5.

Ἐκυσίων κακῶν ἀκύσια ἴκγονα. Damaſc.

Τῆς κολάσεως ὁ τρόπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὸν τρόπον μιμεῖται. Chryſ. ἀνδρ. 19.

[h] μυριάδες ἀνδρῶν καὶ φάλαγγες, ὅσας ἰκετεύοντες μόνον ἡμεῖς, καὶ Θεὸς παντηργάσατο; *Naz. Orat.* 4.
many myriads and ſquadrons of men were there, whom we only and God willing, diſcomfited? ſaith Nazianzene in reference to the of Julian's deſign.

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conferred or inflicted on them: not according to the natural reſult of their practice, but with a comely reference thereto; apt to raiſe in them a ſenſe of God's hand, and to wring from them an acknowledgment of his equity in ſo dealing with them. So when humble modeſty is advanced to honour, and ambitious confidence is thrown into diſgrace; when liberality is bleſſed with increaſe, and avarice is curſed with decay of eſtate; when craft incurreth diſappointment, and ſimplicity findeth good ſucceſs; when haughty might is ſhattered, and helpleſs innocence is preſerved; when the calumnious tongue is
Pſal. xii. 3. bliſtered, *the flattering lips are cut off*, the blaſphemous
Rev. xvi. 6. throat is torn out; when bloody oppreſſors have *blood given them to drink*, and come to welter in their own gore; (an accident which almoſt continually doth happen;) when treacherous men by their own confidents, or by themſelves, are betrayed; when retaliations of vengeance are miniſtered, extorting confeſſions like to that
Judg. i. 7. of Adoni-bezek, *As I have done, ſo God hath requited me*; deſerving ſuch exprobrations as that of Samuel to Agag,
1 Sam. xv. 33. *As thy ſword hath made women childleſs, ſo ſhall thy mother be childleſs among women*; grounding ſuch reflec-
2 Macc. ix. 28. tions as that concerning Antiochus, *Thus the murderer and blaſphemer having ſuffered moſt grievouſly, as he entreated other men, ſo died he a miſerable death*; by ſuch occurrences the finger of God doth point out and indicate itſelf; they ſpeak themſelves immediately to come
Luke xiv. 12. from that juſt God, who doth ἀνταποδιδόναι, render to men
Rom. xii. 19. anſwerably to their doings; who payeth men their due, ſometimes in value, often *in ſpecie*, according to the
Jer. xxxii. 19. ſtricteſt way of reckoning. *He*, as the Prophet ſaith, *is great in counſel, and mighty in work: for his eyes are open to all the ways of the ſons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruits of his doings.*
Pſal. lxii. 12. This indeed is a ſort of adminiſtration moſt conformable to God's exact juſtice, and moſt conducible to his holy deſigns of inſtructing and correcting offenders. He there-
Jer. l. 15. li. 49. fore hath declared it to be his way. *It is*, (ſaith the Prophet, directing his ſpeech to the inſtruments of divine

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vengeance upon Babylon,) *the vengeance of the Lord: take vengeance upon her; as ſhe hath done, do unto her.* And, *the day of the Lord* (ſaith another Prophet, concerning the like judgment upon Edom,) *is near upon all the heathen: as thou haſt done, it ſhall be done unto thee; thy reward ſhall return upon thine own head.* Thereby doth God mean to declare himſelf the Judge and Governor of men: For, *I will,* ſaith he in Ezekiel, *do unto them after their way, and according to their deſerts will I judge them; and they ſhall know that I am the Lord.* Farther,

Obad. 15. Ezek. xxxv. 15.

Ezek. vii. 27. Job xxxiv. 11.

7. Another argument of ſpecial Providence is, the harmonious conſpiracy of various accidents to one end or effect. If that one thing ſhould hit advantageouſly to the production of ſome conſiderable event, it may with ſome plauſibility be attributed to fortune, or common providence: yet that divers things, having no dependence or coherence one with the other, in divers places, through ſeveral times, ſhould all join their forces to compaſs it, cannot well otherwiſe than be aſcribed to God's ſpecial care wiſely directing, to his own hand powerfully wielding, thoſe concurrent inſtruments to one good purpoſe. For it is beſide the nature, it is beyond the reach of fortune, to range various cauſes in ſuch order. Blind fortune cannot apprehend or catch the ſeaſons and junctures of things, which ariſe from the motions of cauſes in their nature indifferent and arbitrary: to it therefore no ſuch event can reaſonably be imputed. So to the bringing about our Lord's paſſion, (that great event, which is ſo particularly aſſigned to God's hand,) we may obſerve the monſtrous treachery of Judas, the ſtrange malignity of the Jewiſh rulers, the prodigious levity of the people, the wonderful eaſineſs of Pilate, with other notable accidents, to have jumped in order thereto. So alſo that a malicious traitor ſhould conceive kindneſs toward any, that he ſhould be miſtaken in the object of his favour, that he ſhould expreſs his mind in a way ſubject to deliberate examination, in terms apt to breed ſuſpicion where the plot was laid; that the counſellors ſhould deſpiſe it, and

—ἃ κατὰ τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ μαρτύρων πρῶτος ἐφεῦρε κολαστήρια, ταῦθ' ὑπομείναντα δικαιοτάτῃ ψήφῳ. *Euſeb.* lib. i. *de Vit. Conſt. de Maximino* ſub finem. Is oculos qui eruerat Chriſtianis, ipſe viſu orbatus.

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yet not ſmother it; that the king inſtantly, by a light darted into his mind, ſhould deſcry it: theſe things ſo happily meeting, may argue God (who mouldeth the hearts, who guideth the hands, who enlighteneth the minds of men) to have been engaged in the detection of this day's black conſpiracy.

Such are ſome characters of ſpecial Providence; each of which ſingly appearing in any occurrence would in a conſiderate man breed an opinion thereof; each of them being very congruous to the ſuppoſition of it; no ſuch appearances being otherwiſe ſo clearly and cleverly explicable, as by aſſigning the divine hand for their principal cauſe. But the connection of them all in one event (when divers odd accidents do befall at a ſeaſonable time, according to exigency for the public benefit, the preſervation of princes, the ſecurity of God's people, the protection of right, the maintenance of truth and piety according to the wiſhes and prayers of good men, with proper retribution and vengeance upon the wretched deſigners of miſchief; ſuch a complication, I ſay, of theſe marks in one event) may thoroughly ſuffice to raiſe a firm perſuaſion, to force a confident acknowledgment concerning God's providence, in any conſiderate and ingenuous perſon: it readily will diſpoſe ſuch perſons upon any ſuch occaſion to ſay, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

Vid. Diod. Sic. lib. xv. p. 482.

Pſal. cxviii. 23.

Notwithſtanding therefore any obſcurity or intricacy that ſometime may appear in the courſe of Providence notwithſtanding any general exceptions that may by perverſe incredulity be alleged againſt the conduct of things there are good marks obſervable, whereby (if we are not very blockiſh, drowſy, ſupine, lazy, or froward; if we will conſider wiſely, with induſtrious attention and care with minds pure from vain prejudices, and corrupt affections) we may diſcern and underſtand God's doing. Which to do is the firſt duty ſpecified in my text: upon which having inſiſted ſo largely, I ſhall (hoping you will favour me with a little patience) briefly touch the reſt.

Εἰ μὴ σημεῖα καὶ θαύματα, ἀλλ' ἰσικότα σημείοις πράγματα, δείγματα τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ προνοίας, καὶ ἀντιλήψεως ἀφάτου. *Chryſ. ad Olymp.* Ep. i.

II. It is the duty of us all, upon ſuch remarkable o

currences of Providence, to *fear* God: *All men*, it is ſaid, *ſhall fear*. It is our duty in ſuch caſes to be affected with all ſorts of fear; with a fear of awful dread, with a fear of hearty reverence, with a fear of ſober caution; yea, ſometimes with a fear of dejecting conſternation. When God doth appear *clad with his robes of vengeance and zeal*, denouncing and diſcharging judgment; when he repreſenteth himſelf *fearful in praiſes, terrible in his doings toward the children of men, working terrible things in righteouſneſs*; it ſhould ſtrike into our hearts a dread of his glorious majeſty, of his mighty power, of his ſevere juſtice, of *his glorious and fearful name*: it ſhould inſtil into our minds a reverence of his excellent wiſdom, his exceeding goodneſs, his perfect holineſs: it ſhould breed in our ſouls a ſolicitous care of diſpleaſing and provoking him: it ſhould cauſe us in our hearts to ſhake and tremble before him. Then is that of the Pſalmiſt to be put in practice, *Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world ſtand in awe of him. Tremble, thou earth, at the preſence of the Lord, at the preſence of the God of Jacob.* Such diſpenſations are in their nature declarative of thoſe divine attributes which do require ſuch affections: they are ſet before our eyes to caſt us into a very ſerious and ſolemn frame; to abaſh and deter us from offending, by obſerving the danger of incurring puniſhments like to thoſe which we behold inflicted upon preſumptuous tranſgreſſors; upon thoſe who do heinouſly violate right, or furiouſly impugn truth, or profanely deſpiſe piety; who earneſtly proſecute wicked enterpriſes; who perſecute the friends of God with outrageous violence, or treacherous ſubtilty. Upon infliction of ſuch puniſhments, *all the people ſhall hear, and fear, and do no more preſumptuouſly*, ſaith God himſelf, declaring the nature and drift of them. They do plainly demonſtrate, that there is no preſuming to eſcape being detected in our cloſe machinations by God's all-ſeeing eye; being defeated in our bold attempts by God's almighty hand; being ſorely chaſtiſed for our iniquity by God's impartial judgment. Extremely blind and ſtupid therefore muſt we

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Job xxxvii. 22. xiii. 11. Pſal. lii. 6. lxviii. 35. Dan. vi. 26. Iſa. lix. 17. Exod. xv. 11. Pſal. lxvi. 3. 5. lxv. 5. (cxxx. 3.) Deut. xxviii. 58. x. 17.

Iſa. lxvi. 2.

Pſal. xxxiii. 8. cxiv. 7.

Deut. xvii. 13. xiii. 11. xix. 20.

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be, or monſtrouſly ſturdy and profane, if ſuch experiments of divine power and juſtice do not awe us, and fright us from ſin. *When the lion roareth, who will not fear? When the trumpet is blown in the city, ſhall not the people be afraid?* Shall he, *at* whom *the mountains quake, and the hills melt;* whoſe *indignation the nations are not able to abide;* *at* whoſe *wrath the earth doth ſhake and tremble at* whoſe *reproof the pillars of heaven are aſtoniſhed;* ſhall he viſibly frown, ſhall his wrath flame out, ſhall he ſhake his rod of exemplary vengeance over us, and we ſtand void of ſenſe or fear? If ſo, then ſurely a brutiſh dotage or a gigantic ſtoutneſs doth poſſeſs us.

Hoſ. xi. 10. Amos iii. 6. 8. Nah. i. 5. Jer. x. 10. Pſal. civ. 32. xviii. 7. lxxvi. 8. cxliii. 2. Job xxvi. 11. (Iſa. lxiv. 3. Ezek. xxi. 10. Iſa. xxv. 3. lix. 18, 19.)

III. We are in ſuch caſes obliged to *declare God's work:* that is, openly to acknowledge and avow, to applaud and celebrate the ſpecial providence of God, with his adorable perfections diſplayed in ſuch events; to the glory of God's name, in expreſſion of our reverence and gratitude toward him, for the common edification of men; for which uſes they greatly ſerve, to which purpoſes they are deſigned. We ſhould not view ſuch providential occurrences, like dumb beaſts, with a dull or careleſs ſilence, as if we did not mind them, or were not concerned in them: we ſhould not ſuppreſs or ſtifle the knowledge of them in our breaſts, as if they were barely matters of private conſideration and uſe; we ſhould not let our obſervation and reſentment of them be fruitleſs, ſo as to yield no honour to God, no benefit to man. But we ſhould propagate and convey them into others: in ſo loud a tone, in ſo lively a ſtrain we ſhould vent them, as thereby to excite the notice, to inflame the affections of all men within the reach of our voice; provoking them to conſpire with us in acknowledgment of God's power and wiſdom, in acclamation to his juſtice and goodneſs. This is the due improvement of our *glory;* that peculiar excellency, wherein chiefly (except in our reaſon) we do ſurpaſs all creatures; that without which our reaſon itſelf is more than half unprofitable; that whereby we put our beſt member to its beſt uſe. For this we have the devout Pſalmiſt's pious reſolutions, his exemplary performances,

Pſal. lvii. 8.

his zealous wiſhes, his earneſt exhortations to guide and move us. *I will ſpeak of the glorious honour of thy majeſty, and of thy wondrous works. Men ſhall ſpeak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatneſs. They ſhall ſpeak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.* So did he ſignify his reſolution. *I have not hid thy righteouſneſs within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulneſs and thy ſalvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindneſs and thy truth from the great congregation.* So his conſcience teſtified of his practice. *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men: that they would offer the ſacrifice of thankſgiving, and declare his works with gladneſs.* So doth he pour forth his deſire. *O clap your hands, all ye people; ſhout unto God with the voice of triumph. Sing unto the Lord, bleſs his name: ſhew forth his ſalvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. Come and ſee the works of God. Sing forth the honour of his name, make his praiſe glorious. O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.* So doth he ſummon, ſo doth he urge us to this practice; and in his deportment we may ſee our duty.

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Pſal. cxlv. 5, 6. 11. (lxxvii. 12. ix. 14.)

Pſal. xl. 10.

Pſal. cvii. 8. 15. 21, 22. 31.

Pſ. xlvii. 1. xcvi. 2, 3. cv. 2. lxvi. 5. 2. (lxvi. 16.) cv. 1.

IV. It is peculiarly the duty and practice of good men upon ſuch occaſions to feel and to expreſs religious joy. *The righteous ſhall be glad in the Lord.* Good men indeed then have great matter, and much cauſe, on many accounts, to be glad.

It becometh them to rejoice, as having an univerſal complacence in God's proceedings, as gratefully reliſhing all diſpenſations of Providence. They, as pious, are diſpoſed to bleſs and praiſe God for all things incident, and cannot therefore but rejoice; joy being an inſeparable compation of gratitude and praiſe. Hence, *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart.* Hence, *The voice of ſalvation and rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous.* Hence, *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praiſe is comely for the upright;* is an exhortation backed with a very good reaſon.

Pſal. xcvii. 11. Pſ. cxviii. 15. Pſ. xxxiii. 1.

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They cannot but find ſatisfaction in obſerving God's providence notably diſcovered, to the confirmation of their faith, and cheriſhing their hopes; together with the conviction of infidelity, and confuſion of profaneneſs.

Pſ. xxxiii. 21. xiii. 5. cvii. 42. *Our heart,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſhall rejoice in him, becauſe we have truſted in his holy name. I have truſted in thy mercy; my heart ſhall rejoice in thy ſalvation. The righteous ſhall ſee it, and rejoice; and all iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth.*

It is to them no ſmall pleaſure to behold God's holy perfections illuſtriouſly ſhining forth; and the glory of him (who is the principal object of their love, their reverence, their hope, and confidence) to be conſpicuouſly advanced.

Pſ. xcvii. 12. xxx. 4. xcvii. 8, 9. xlviii. 11. *Rejoice,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *O ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs. Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, becauſe of thy judgments, O Lord. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth.*

It is to them ground of exceeding comfort, to receive ſo clear pledges of God's love and favour, his truth and fidelity, his bounty and munificence toward them, expreſſed in ſuch watchful care over them, ſuch protection in dangers, ſuch aid in needs, ſuch deliverance from miſchiefs vouchſafed to them. Such benefits they cannot receive from God's hand, without that cheerfulneſs which always doth adhere to gratitude[a].

Pſ. xiii. 6. lxiii. 7. lxxi. 23. xxxi. 7. cxxvi. 3. v. 11. *I will,* ſaith David, *ſing unto the Lord, becauſe he hath dealt bountifully with me. Becauſe thou haſt been my helper, therefore in the ſhadow of thy wings I will rejoice. My lips ſhall greatly rejoice in thee; and my ſoul, which thou haſt redeemed. I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou haſt conſidered my trouble, and haſt known my ſoul in adverſities. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Let all thoſe that put their truſt in thee rejoice: let them ever ſhout for joy, becauſe thou defendeſt them.*

They are alſo greatly refreſhed with apprehenſion of the

[a] Sen. de Benef. ii. 22. Cum accipiendum judicaverimus, hilares accipiamus, profitentes gaudium, &c. *Vid. ib.* 30.

happy fruits ſprouting from ſuch diſpenſations of Providence; ſuch as are the benefit of mankind, the peace and proſperity of the civil ſtate, the preſervation, ſettlement, enlargement, advancement of God's Church, the ſupport of right, the ſuccour of innocence, the maintenance of truth, the encouragement and furtherance of piety; the reſtraint of violence, the diſcountenance of error, the correction of vice and impiety. In theſe things they, as faithful ſervants of God, and real friends of goodneſs, as bearing hearty good-will and compaſſion to mankind, as true lovers of their country, as living and ſenſible members of the Church, cannot but rejoice. Seeing by theſe things their own beſt intereſt, (which is no other than the advantage of goodneſs,) their chief honour, (which conſiſts in the promotion of divine glory,) their trueſt content, (which is placed in the proſperity of Sion,) are highly furthered; how can they look on them ſpringing up, without great delight and complacence? *O*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſing unto the Lord—for he hath done marvellous things. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the houſe of Iſrael: all the ends of the earth have ſeen the ſalvation of our God.* And, *Sing, O heavens,* crieth the Prophet, *and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into ſinging, O ye mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted.* And, *When,* ſaith he, *ye ſhall ſee this,* (the comfort of God's people,) *your heart ſhall rejoice, and your bones ſhall flouriſh like an herb: and the hand of the Lord ſhall be known toward his ſervants, and his indignation toward his enemies.*

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Pſ. cxxii. 6. (1 Cor. xii. 26.) Pſ. xcviii. 1. 3. Iſa. xlix. 13. Pſ. xcvi. 11. 13. Iſa. lxvi. 14.

Even in the fruſtration of wicked deſigns, attended with ſevere execution of vengeance on the contrivers and abettors of them, they may have a pleaſant ſatisfaction; they muſt then yield a cheerful applauſe to Divine juſtice. *The righteous,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſhall rejoice when he ſeeth the vengeance:* and, *Let the wicked,* ſaith he, *periſh at the preſence of God; but let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea let them exceedingly rejoice.* Whence, at God's infliction of judgment upon Babylon, it is ſaid in Jeremy, *Then the heaven, and the earth, and all*

Pſ. lviii. 10. Job xxii. 19. Pſal. lxviii. 2, 3. Jer. li. 48.

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that is therein, ſhall ſing for Babylon; and at the fall of myſtical Babylon, in the Apocalypſe it is likewiſe ſaid: *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apoſtles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.* Farther,

Rev. xviii. 20.

V. The next duty preſcribed to good men in ſuch caſes is, to *truſt in God*, that is, to have their affiance in God (upon all ſuch like occaſions, in all urgencies of need) ſettled, improved, and corroborated thereby. This indeed is the proper end, immediately regarding us, of God's ſpecial providence, diſcloſing itſelf in any miraculous, or in any remarkable way; to nouriſh in well-diſpoſed minds that faith in God, which is the root of all piety, and ground of devotion. Such experiments are found arguments to perſuade good men, that God doth govern and order things for their beſt advantage; they are powerful incentives, driving them in all exigencies to ſeek God's help; they are moſt convincing evidences, that God is abundantly able, very willing, and ever ready to ſuccour them. *They*, ſaith the Pfalmiſt, *that know thy name will put their truſt in thee: for thou, Lord, haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee.* And, *I*, ſaith he, *will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will truſt in the covert of thy wings: for thou, O God, haſt heard my vows: thou haſt been a ſhelter for me, and a ſtrong tower from the enemy.* It is, indeed, a great aggravation of diffidence in God, that having *taſted and ſeen that the Lord is good;* having felt ſo manifeſt experience of divine goodneſs; having received ſo notable pledges of God's favourable inclination to help us; we yet will not rely upon him. As a friend, who by ſignal inſtances of kindneſs hath aſſured his good will, hath great cauſe of offence, if he be ſuſpected of unwillingneſs in a needful ſeaſon to afford his relief: ſo may God moſt juſtly be diſpleaſed, when we, (notwithſtanding ſo palpable demonſtrations of his kindneſs,) by diſtruſting him, do in effect queſtion the ſincerity of his friendſhip, or the conſtancy of his goodneſs toward us.

(Pſ. lxxviii. 7.)

Pſ. ix. 10.

Pſ. lxi. 3, 4, 5. cxv. 9, &c. cxxx. 7.

Pſ. xxxiv. 8.

Eccluſ. ii. 10.

VI. Good men upon ſuch occaſions ſhould *glory: All the upright in heart ſhall glory.* Should *glory*, that is, in contemplation of ſuch providences feeling ſprightly

ations of mind and tranſports of affection, they ſhould SERM. XI.
bit triumphant demonſtrations of ſatisfaction and ala-
r. It becometh them not in ſuch caſes to be dumpiſh
emure; but jocund and crank in their humour, briſk
gay in their looks, pleaſantly flippant and free in
ſpeech, jolly and debonair in their behaviour; every
ſignifying the extreme complacency they take in
's doing, and the full content they taſte in their ſtate.
y with ſolemn exultation ſhould triumph in ſuch Pſ. cxxvi. 1, &c.
ts, as in victories achieved by the glorious hand of
in their behalf, in approbation of their cauſe, in
r toward their perſons, for their great benefit and
fort. They may (not as proudly aſſuming to them-
the glory due to God, but as gratefully ſenſible of
felicity ſpringing from God's favour) *ſe jactare, ſe
bus efferre*, (as the Hebrew word doth ſignify;) that
a ſort boaſt, and commend themſelves as very happy
eir relation to God, by virtue of his protection and
They may (not with a haughty inſolence, or wanton
ance, but with a ſober confidence and cheerfulneſs)
t upon baffled impiety[a], by their expreſſions and de-
our upbraiding the folly, the baſeneſs, the impotency
wretchedneſs thereof, in competition with the wiſ-
in oppoſition to the power of God, their friend and
n. For ſuch carriage in ſuch caſes we have the
ice and the advice of the Pſalmiſt, to warrant and
t us. *In God*, ſaith he, *we boaſt all the day long*, Pſal. xliv. 8.
raiſe thy name for ever. Thou, Lord, haſt made me xcii. 4.
*through thy work; and I will triumph in the works of
ands. We will rejoice in thy ſalvation; and in the* Pſ. xx. 5.
of our God we will ſet up our banners. Glory ye in cv. 3. 2.
*ly name: let the heart of them rejoice that ſeek the
Sing unto him, ſing pſalms unto him; talk ye of
s wondrous works. Save us, O Lord our God, and* Pſal. cvi. 47
*r us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy
and to triumph in thy praiſe.* Such ſhould be the

[a] lii. 6, 7. The righteous ſhall laugh at him, *or*, deride him, *in this*
; Lo, this is the man that made not God his ſtrength.

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reſult (upon us) of God's merciful diſpenſations toward his people.

I ſhall only farther remark, that the word here uſed is by the Greek rendered, ἐπαινεθήσονται, *they ſhall be praiſed:* which ſenſe the original will bear, and the reaſon of the caſe may admit. For ſuch diſpenſations ever do adorn integrity, and yield commendation to good men. They declare the wiſdom of ſuch perſons, in adhering to God, in repoſing upon God's help, in embracing ſuch courſes which God doth approve and bleſs: they plainly tell how dear ſuch perſons are to God; how incomparably happy in his favour, how impregnably ſafe under his protection; as having his infallible wiſdom and his invincible power engaged on their ſide. This cannot but render them admirable, and their ſtate glorious in the eyes of all men; inducing them to profeſs with the Pſalmiſt, *Happy is the people, which is in ſuch a caſe; yea, happy is that people, whoſe God is the Lord.* And of ſuch a people, that declaration from the ſame mouth is verified, *In thy name ſhall they rejoice all the day long, and in thy righteouſneſs ſhall they be exalted: for thou art the glory of their ſtrength, and in thy favour their horn ſhall be exalted.*

Pſal. cxxvi. 3. cxxv. 1, &c. cxxxviii. 1, &c. Pſal. cxliv. 15. xxxiii. 12. Pſal. lxxxix. 16, 17.

Such are the duties ſuggeſted in our text, as ſuiting theſe occaſions, when God in a ſpecial manner hath vouchſafed to protect his people, or to reſcue them from imminent miſchiefs, by violent aſſault or by fraudulent contrivance levelled againſt them. I ſhould apply theſe particulars to the preſent caſe ſolemnized by us: but I ſhall rather recommend the application to your ſagacity, than farther infringe your patience, by ſpending thereon ſo many words as it would exact. You do well know the ſtory, which by ſo many years repetition hath been impreſſed on your minds: and by reflecting thereon,

You will eaſily diſcern, how God, in the ſeaſonable diſcovery of this execrable plot, (the maſterpiece of wicked machinations ever conceived in human brain, or deviſed on this ſide hell, ſince the foundation of things,) in the happy deliverance of our Nation and Church from the deſperate miſchiefs intended toward them, in the remark-

able protection of right and truth, did ſignalize his provi- SERM. XI.
dence.

You will be affected with hearty reverence toward the gracious Author of our ſalvation, and with humble dread toward the juſt awarder of vengeance upon thoſe miſcreant wretches, who *digged this pit, and fell into it themſelves.*

You will be ready with pious acknowledgment and admiration of God's mercy, his juſtice, his wiſdom, to declare and magnify this notable work done by him among us.

You muſt needs feel devout reſentments of joy for the glory ariſing to God, and the benefits accruing to us, in the preſervation of God's anointed, our juſt Sovereign, with his royal poſterity: in the freeing our country from civil broils, diſorders, and confuſions; from the yokes of uſurpation and ſlavery; from grievous extortions and rapines; from bloody perſecutions and trials, with the like ſpawn of diſaſtrous and tragical conſequences, by this deſign threatened upon it: in upholding our Church (which was ſo happily ſettled, and had ſo long gloriouſly flouriſhed) from utter ruin: in ſecuring our profeſſion of God's holy truth, the truly catholic faith of Chriſt, (refined from thoſe droſſy alloys, wherewith the rudeneſs and ſloth of blind times, the fraud of ambition and covetous deſigners, the pravity of ſenſual and profane men had embaſed and corrupted it,) together with a pure worſhip of God, an edifying adminiſtration of God's word and ſacraments, a comely, wholeſome, and moderate diſcipline, conformable to divine preſcription and primitive example; in reſcuing us from having impious errors, ſcandalous practices, and ſuperſtitious rites, with mercileſs violence obtruded upon us: in continuing therefore to us the moſt deſirable comforts and conveniences of our lives.

You farther conſidering this ſignal teſtimony of divine goodneſs, will thereby be moved to hope and confide in God for his gracious preſervation from the like pernicious attempts againſt the ſafety of our Prince and welfare of our country, againſt our peace, our laws, our religion;

SERM. XI. eſpecially from Romiſh zeal and bigotry, (that mint of woful factions and combuſtions, of treaſonable conſpiracies, of barbarous maſſacres, of horrid aſſaſſinations, of inteſtine rebellions, of foreign invaſions, of ſavage tortures and butcheries, of *holy leagues* and *pious frauds*, through Chriſtendom, and particularly among us,) which as it without reaſon damneth, ſo it would by any means deſtroy all that will not crouch thereto.

You will, in fine, with joyous feſtivity, glory and triumph in this illuſtrious demonſtration of God's favour toward us; ſo as heartily to join in thoſe due acclamations of bleſſing and praiſe.

Pſal. cxxiv. 6. (lxviii. 32.) *Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath not given as a prey to their teeth. Our ſoul is eſcaped as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowlers: the ſnare is broken, and we are eſcaped.*

Rev. xix. 1, 2. *Alleluiah; Salvation, and glory, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.*

Rev. xv. 3. *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, O thou King of ſaints.*

Pſal. lxxii. 18, 19. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who only doth wondrous things. And bleſſed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.*

SERMON XII.

A CONSECRATION SERMON.

Henry the Seventh's Chapel, July 4, 1663. at the Biſhop of Man's conſecration.

PSAL. cxxxii. 16.

I will alſo clothe her prieſts with ſalvation.

THE context runs thus: *The Lord hath ſworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I ſet upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my teſtimony that I ſhall teach them, their children ſhall alſo ſit upon thy throne for evermore. For the Lord hath choſen Zion; he hath deſired it for his habitation. This is my reſt for ever: here will I dwell; for I have deſired it. I will abundantly bleſs her proviſion: I will ſatisfy her poor with bread.* I WILL ALSO CLOTHE HER PRIESTS WITH SALVATION: *and her ſaints ſhall ſhout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud,* &c. SERM. XII.

If all, not only inaugurations of perſons, but dedications even of inanimate things to ſome extraordinary uſe, hath been uſually attended with eſpecial ſignifications of joy and feſtival ſolemnity; with great reaſon the conſecration of a perſon to ſo high and ſacred a function, as that of a Chriſtian Biſhop, (that is, of a prince, or principal paſtor in God's Church,) requires moſt peculiar teſtimonies of our gratulation and content: the face of things ought then to be ſerene and cheerful; the thoughts of men benign and favourable; the words comfortable and auſpi-

SERM. XII. cious, that are uttered upon ſuch occaſion. And that ours at preſent ſhould be ſuch, the ſubject as well as the ſeaſon of our diſcourſe doth require. Words few, but pregnant, and affording ample matter for our beſt affections to work upon: and which more particularly will engage us, both to a hearty thankfulneſs for paſt benefits, and to a confident expectation of future bleſſings; while they acquaint us with the ancient exhibition of a gracious promiſe, remind us of the faithful performance thereof hitherto, and aſſure us of its certain accompliſhment for the future. The occaſion whereof was this:

King David, moved by a devout inclination to promote God's honour, and benefit the Church, had vowed to build a magnificent temple, imploring God's propitious concurrence with, and approbation of, his deſign. Whereupon Almighty God not only declares his acceptance of that pious reſolution, but rewards it with a bountiful promiſe, conſiſting of two parts; one conditional, relating to David's children and poſterity, that they in an uninterrupted ſucceſſion ſhould for ever enjoy the royal dignity, in caſe they did conſtantly perſiſt in obſerving his covenant, and the teſtimonies that he ſhould teach them; the other more abſolute, that however, what he chiefly intended concerning God's eſtabliſhed worſhip and the perpetual welfare of the Church, God would have an eſpecial care that it ſhould fully and certainly be accompliſhed: that he would for ever fix his reſidence in Sion; that he would protect and proſper it, and all that did belong thereto; eſpecially thoſe that did moſt need his favour and aſſiſtance, the poor, the prieſts, and the ſaints, חסידי (or *gentle ones.*) This is briefly the importance of the general promiſe wherein is comprehended that particular one whereon we are to treat: and in which we may obſerve,

1. The Promiſer, *I.*

2. The perſons who are eſpecially concerned in the promiſe, *her Prieſts.*

3. The thing promiſed, *clothing with ſalvation.*

I. I ſay, the Promiſer, *I:* that is, the Lord; the moſt

true, the moſt conſtant, the moſt powerful God; moſt true and ſincere in the declaration of his purpoſe, moſt conſtant and immutable in the proſecution, moſt powerful and uncontrolable in the perfect execution thereof: whoſe *words are right, and all* whoſe *works are done in truth:* who *will not break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips:* whoſe *counſel ſhall ſtand, and* who *will do all his pleaſure.* Theſe glorious attributes and perfections of his, ſo often celebrated in holy Writ, do ground our reliance upon all God's promiſes, and do oblige us, notwithſtanding the greateſt improbabilities or difficulties objected, to believe the infallible performance of this.

Pſal. xxxiii. 4. lxxxix. 34. Iſa. lxvi. 10.

II. The perſons whom the promiſe mainly regards, *her Prieſts.* *Prieſts,* that is, perſons peculiarly devoted to, and employed in, ſacred matters; diſtinguiſhed expreſsly from the *poor,* (that is, other meek and humble perſons;) and from the *ſaints,* (that is, all other good and religious men.) And, *her* Prieſts; that is, the Prieſts of Sion: of that Sion which *the Lord hath choſen;* which *he hath deſired for his* permanent *habitation;* which he hath reſolved to *reſt* and *reſide in for ever.* Whence it plainly enough follows, that the Prieſts and Paſtors of the Chriſtian Church are hereby, if not ſolely, yet principally deſigned. Which interpretation, becauſe it is in a manner the foundation of our ſubſequent diſcourſe, and by ſome it may perhaps not be readily admitted, I ſhall endeavour farther to confirm by theſe few arguments.

Contra, 2 Chron. vii. 21.

1. Becauſe the covenant here mentioned is not, as to the main parts thereof, of a conditional or temporary nature, but abſolute and perpetual; and muſt therefore be underſtood to reſpect the Chriſtian Church: (that of the Jews being long ſince rejected, their temple demoliſhed, their Sion utterly forſaken.) For although one particular contained therein, concerning the continual ſucceſſion of David's poſterity in the regal authority over Iſrael, hath a condition explicitly annexed; (and, conſequently, the effects depending upon the performance of that condition were contingent and mutable;) yet all the reſt of this co-

Vide 2 Chron. vii. 16.

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Ver. 35, 36, 37. *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto David: his ſeed ſhall endure for ever, and his throne as the ſun before me: it ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witneſs in heaven.* No words can expreſs more fully a perpetual duration, or at leaſt one co-extended with the duration of the world, than thoſe do. And the Prophet Jeremy, referring alſo to this very covenant, and particularly to this very clauſe thereof, thus expreſſes the matter: *Thus ſaith the Lord;*

Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21. Vide 2 Chr. vii. 16. *If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there ſhould not be day and night in their ſeaſon; then may alſo my covenant be broken with David my ſervant, that he ſhould not have a ſon to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the prieſts, my miniſters.* But farther,

2. The completion of this individual promiſe is both by the Prophets foretold, and expreſſed by the Evangeliſts, to appertain to the times of the Goſpel. Ye heard even now the words of Jeremy, which are by him applied to

Jer. xxxiii. 15. thoſe times, when God would cauſe *the Branch of righteouſneſs* (that is, Jeſus of Nazareth, our bleſſed Saviour) *to grow up unto David, who ſhould execute judgment and*

Verſe 16. *righteouſneſs in the land. In thoſe days,* ſaith he farther, *ſhall Judah be ſaved, and Jeruſalem ſhall dwell ſafely: and this is the name wherewith ſhe ſhall be called,* (or rather, *which he ſhall be called,* as not only the vulgar Latin and the Greek interpreters, but the Chaldee alſo read it,) *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* Likewiſe in the fifty-fifth of Iſaiah, God thus invites the

Gentiles: *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your ſoul ſhall live: and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David:* that is, I will ratify that everlaſting covenant, which, in your behalf, I once made with David, and will confer on you thoſe favours which I faithfully promiſed him; relating to this very promiſe alſo. For both in Solomon's prayer, (2 Chron. vi.) which in all probability was indited about the ſame time, and upon the ſame occaſion with this Pſalm, and in the eighty-ninth Pſalm, the benefits of the ſame covenant are called *the mercies of David.* *O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed, remember the mercies of David thy ſervant,* ſaith Solomon: and, *My mercy,* ſaith God, *will I keep with him for evermore, and my covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him:* and, *My faithfulneſs and my mercy ſhall be with him;* that is, *my faithful* (or *ſure*) *mercy;* τὰ ὅσια πιστὰ, as the LXX. and St. Paul with them in the Acts, render this place of Iſaiah. And in the ſong of Zachary we have one paſſage of this promiſe cited, and applied to the times of the Goſpel: *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who hath viſited and redeemed his people; and hath raiſed up a horn of ſalvation in the houſe of his ſervant David; as he ſpake by the mouth of his holy prophets:* viz. by the mouth of this prophetical Pſalmiſt here, where it is ſaid, *There will I make the horn of David to bud;* and in the parallel Pſalm lxxxix. *In my name ſhall his horn be exalted.* To omit thoſe many places where our Saviour, in correſpondence to this promiſe, is affirmed to *poſſeſs the throne of his father David,* and *to rule over the houſe of Jacob for ever.* Moreover,

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Iſa. lv. 3.

2 Chron. vi. 42.

Pſ. lxxxix. 28. Ver. 24.

Acts xiii. 34.

Luke i. 68, 69, 70.

Verſe 24.

Vide Luke i. 32. edit. Curcel.

3. That by the Sion here mentioned is not chiefly meant that material mountain in Judea, but rather that myſtical Rock of Divine grace and evangelical truth, upon which the Chriſtian Church, the only everlaſting temple of God, is unmoveably ſeated, is very probable, (or rather, manifeſtly certain,) by the Prophets' conſtant acception thereof in this ſenſe, when they aſſign the character of perpetual durability thereto. As in Iſaiah lx. where he thus propheſies of the Chriſtian Church: *The ſons alſo of*

Iſa. lx. 14, 15, 16.

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them that afflicted thee ſhall come bending unto thee, and all they that deſpiſed thee ſhall bow themſelves down at the ſoles of thy feet; and they ſhall call thee The City of the Lord, The Sion of the Holy One of Iſrael. Whereas thou haſt been forſaken and hated, ſo that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou ſhalt alſo ſuck the milk of the Gentiles, and ſhalt ſuck the breaſts of kings, &c. And the Prophet Micah, ſpeaking of *the laſt days*, (that is, of the evangelical times, *when the mountain of the houſe of the Lord ſhould be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains,*) ſaith thus: *And I will make her that halted, a remnant; and her that was caſt far off, a ſtrong nation: and the Lord ſhall reign over them in mount Sion from henceforth even for ever.* And the Prophet Joel, ſpeaking of the ſame times, (when God *would pour out his ſpirit upon all fleſh,*) hath theſe words: *So ſhall ye know, that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Sion, my holy mountain: then ſhall Jeruſalem be holy, and there ſhall no ſtrangers paſs through her any more.* All which places no man can reaſonably doubt, and all Chriſtians do firmly conſent to reſpect the Chriſtian Church. To which we may add that paſſage of the author to the Hebrews, (ch. xii. ver. 22.) *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem;* that is, to the Chriſtian Church.

Mic. iv. 1.

Verſe 7.

Joel ii. 28. iii. 16.

4. The manner of this covenant's delivery, and confirmation by the Divine oath, argues the inconditionate, irreverſible, and perpetual conſtitution thereof: for to God's moſt abſolute and immutable decrees this moſt auguſt and ſolemn confirmation doth peculiarly agree. So the Apoſtle to the Hebrews ſeems to intimate: *Wherein,* ſaith he, *God, willing more abundantly to demonſtrate the immutability of his counſel,* (ἐπιδεῖξαι τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς,) *interpoſed an oath.*

Heb. vi. 17.

We may therefore, I ſuppoſe, upon theſe grounds, ſolidly and ſafely conclude, that this promiſe doth principally belong, and ſhall therefore infallibly be made good, to the Chriſtian prieſthood; to thoſe who, in the Chriſtian Church, by offering ſpiritual ſacrifices of praiſe and

thankſgiving, by directing and inſtructing the people in the knowledge of the evangelical law, by imploring for and pronouncing upon them the divine benedictions, do bear analogy with, and ſupply the room of, the Jewiſh prieſthood. SERM. XII.

From which diſcourſe we may, by the way, deduce this corollary: That the title of *prieſt*, although it did (as moſt certainly it doth not) properly and primarily ſignify a Jewiſh ſacrificer, (or ſlaughterer of beaſts,) doth yet nowiſe deſerve that reproach, which is by ſome, inconſiderately, (not to ſay profanely,) upon that miſtaken ground, commonly caſt upon it; ſince the Holy Scripture itſelf, we ſee, doth here, even in that ſenſe (moſt obnoxious to exception) aſcribe it to the Chriſtian paſtors. And ſo likewiſe doth the Prophet Iſaiah; *And I will alſo take of them for prieſts and for Levites, ſaith the Lord:* ſpeaking as the context plainly declares) of the Gentiles, which ſhould be converted and aggregated to God's Church. And the Prophet Jeremiah: *Neither ſhall the prieſts the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to do ſacrifice continually.* Which prophecy alſo evidently concerns the ſame time and ſtate of things, of which the Prophet Malachi thus foretels: *For, from the riſing of the ſun to the going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incenſe ſhall be offered to my name, and a pure offering.* It were deſirable, therefore, that men would better conſider, before they entertain ſuch groundleſs offences, or paſs ſo uncharitable cenſures upon either words, or perſons, or things. But I proceed to the Iſa. lxvi. 21. Jer. xxxiii. 18. Mal. i. 11.

III. Particular, which is the matter of the promiſe, *clothing with ſalvation.* Where we may obſerve,

Firſt, That the uſual metaphor of being *clothed* doth in the ſacred dialect denote a complete endowment with, a plentiful enjoyment of, or an entire application to, that thing, or quality, with which a perſon is ſaid to be clothed. So is God himſelf ſaid to be *clothed with majeſty and ſtrength.* And David prays, that they might be *clothed with ſhame and diſhonour, that did magnify them-* Pſ. xciii. 1. Pſ. xxxv. 26. cix. 29.

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them tha:
they tha:
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Mic. iv. 1. M
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Verse 7.

Joel ii
vii. 16.

. . . *the princes of the*
Tyre, are said *to clothe*
that bitter adversary of
e himself with cursing, as
cheth of himself, *I put on*
: my judgment was a role
advises us to *put on*, or to
ally, Isaiah introduces our
greatly rejoice in the Lord,
God: for he hath clothed me
n, he hath covered me with the
ridegroom decketh himself with
lorneth herself with her jewels.
tances we may discern,) *to be*
s to be perfectly endowed there-
th it as with a garment, which
vereth the body, so that no part is
dorned thereby.
what is that *salvation* with which
be thus clothed? I answer: *Sal-*
absolutely, and not conjoined with
(or term from which,) doth in the
operly signify a deliverance from, or
s of inconvenience; and, consequently,
good things; and, in effect, the same
ges call felicity and prosperity, or de-
valent to those: the Hebrews having
ord so properly correspondent to those,
n. Whence that title of *Saviour*, and
, so often attributed to Almighty God,
as, the Dispenser of all good gifts; the
Assister, and Protector of men: and to
ly used for, to relieve the needy, to
wful; to restore the sick to his health,
s liberty, the captive to his country; to
from injury, and the humble from con-
the distressed from imminent danger,
unjust condemnation, the slandered from
each: in a word, all the effects of God's

is and power, the whole work of the Divine provi- SERM. XII.
and beneficence, are hereby expreſſed.

We will recite one or two of thoſe many places which confirm this notion. Pſalm lxxxv. 9. *Surely his ſalvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. His ſalvation is nigh;* that is, his loving care attends upon them, to aſſiſt and preſerve them; which in Pſalm cxlv. ver. 19. is thus otherwiſe expreſſed: *He will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will ſave them.* And again, Pſalm cxlix. 4. *The Lord taketh pleaſure in his people; he will beautify the meek with ſalvation:* that is, he will, by his good providence, diſpoſe them into a convenient and decent condition of life. And again, Pſalm cxliv. 10. *It is he that giveth ſalvation unto kings;* that is, by whoſe gracious diſpoſal they proſper, and are preſerved in dignity, plenty, and ſafety.

I will not, by citation of places, labour to confirm ſo obvious a notion: it may ſuffice for that purpoſe, that the ſupreme accompliſhment of all happineſs, the enjoyment of perfect bliſs in heaven, is, in agreement with this Jewiſh acception of the word, moſt commonly ſtyled *ſalvation*. But I muſt add, that, whereas ſalvation may relate either to the outward eſtate of a man's body, life, and fortunes, or to the internal diſpoſitions of the mind; to our preſent condition in this world, or to our future and eternal eſtate: it doth ſeem here (I ſay not, to exclude the latter altogether, yet) more directly and principally to reſpect the former, viz. that external and temporal welfare, which is conſpicuous and viſible in this world. My reaſon is, becauſe the other parts of this prophetical promiſe do, in their moſt natural acception, ſignify that outward proſperity wherewith God would vouchſafe to bleſs his Church: that abundant *benediction of her ſtore*, that *ſatisfying her poor with bread*, that *joyful exultation of her ſaints*, that *clothing her enemies with ſhame*, being expreſſions properly denoting a ſtate of external good weal and comfort; and, in conſonance to them, require that we thus likewiſe underſtand this phraſe; the prieſts being alſo

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queſtionleſs deſigned to partake in this glorious felicity of the Church. Which is alſo confirmed by other prophecies of the ſame tenor and intention: as particularly that in Jer. xxxi. concerning the recollection of Iſrael, and redemption of the ſpiritual Sion, it is ſaid, *I will ſatiate the ſoul of the prieſts with fatneſs, and my people ſhall be ſatisfied with my goodneſs*, &c.

Verſe 14.

Now, although we may adventure ſafely to interpret the declarations of the Divine favour according to the moſt comprehenſive ſenſe of which the words are capable, where they are conceived: (it being the manner of the immenſely-good God, to exceed, rather than to be deficient, in the performance of his word; and to ſurpaſs the expectations he hath raiſed in us, than anywiſe to diſappoint them:) yet, however, the leaſt we can imagine here promiſed to the *prieſts of Sion*, will comprehend theſe three things.

1. A free and ſafe condition of life: that they be not expoſed to continual dangers of ruin; of miſerable ſufferance, or remedileſs injury: that the benefits of peace, and law, and public protection ſhall particularly appertain to them; ſo that their adverſaries (if any they happen to have) ſhall not be incited, by hope of reward or impunity, to hurt their perſons, rifle their goods, diſturb their quiet; but that they ſhall enjoy good degrees of ſecurity, liberty, and tranquillity in this world.

2. A proviſion of competent ſubſiſtence for them: that their condition of life be not wholly neceſſitous, or very penurious, deſtitute of convenient accommodations, or depending altogether for them upon the arbitrary benevolences of men, which is, at beſt, but a more plauſible kind of beggary; but that they ſhall be furniſhed with ſuch reaſonable ſupplies, as are requiſite to encourage them in the cheerful performance of their duty.

3. A ſuitable degree of reſpect, and ſo high a ſtation among men, as may commend them to general eſteem and vindicate them from contempt: that they be not reputed among the dregs and refuſe of the people; that their perſons be not baſe and deſpicable, their names made

the objects of vulgar obloquy, their functions become proſtitute to profane irriſion; but that ſome conſiderable authority, ſome more than ordinary regard and veneration accrue unto them from the high relations which they bear, and from the ſacred buſineſs which they manage. SERM. XII.

All this at leaſt (according to the moſt moderate interpretation of the phraſe) that abundant *ſalvation* doth imply, wherewith God hath promiſed to *inveſt the prieſts of Sion.*

We may therefore preſume, or rather not preſume, but confidently rely upon, and comfort ourſelves in the expectation of God's faithful continuance to fulfil this promiſe. We may aſſure ourſelves, that neither the ſecret envy of them who repine at thoſe encouragements which God's providence hath conferred on prieſts, nor the open malice of thoſe that furiouſly oppugn their welfare, ſhall ever prevail to overwhelm them with extreme miſery, penury, or diſgrace; ſince no endeavour of earth or hell can ever be able to reverſe this everlaſting decree of Heaven, or to defeat that irreſiſtible power which is engaged to its execution. No inferior force can ſtrip them naked of that ſalvation, wherewith the Supreme Truth hath promiſed to clothe them.

Which confidence of ours may be improved, by conſidering the reaſons that might induce Almighty God to reſolve, and promiſe thus favourably in behalf of his prieſts. (For though we cannot penetrate the incomprehenſible depths of the Divine counſel, nor ſhould ever peremptorily conclude concerning the determinate reaſons of his actions: yet, when the wiſdom of his proceedings doth clearly approve itſelf to our underſtandings, we ought readily to acknowledge it, and humbly to praiſe him for it.) Now the reaſons why Divine Providence ſhould undertake to preſerve the prieſthood in ſafety, to procure for them liberal maintenance, and to raiſe them above a ſtate of ſcorn and infamy, may be eſpecially theſe three.

1. It concerns God's honour.
2. The good of the Church requires ſo.
3. Equity and the reaſon of the caſe exacts it.

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In proſecuting which heads of diſcourſe, I ſhall not ſeem to you, I hope, to tranſgreſs the rules of modeſty or decency. There be certain ſeaſons, wherein confeſſedly it is not only excuſable, but expedient alſo, to commend one's ſelf; as when a man is falſely accuſed, or unjuſtly afflicted. And with greater reaſon ſometime men are allowed to praiſe the country where they were born and bred, the family to which they are allied, the ſociety to which they are more eſpecially related. And if at this time I aſſume the like liberty, the occaſion, I hope, will apologize for me. It becomes not me to be an adviſer, much leſs a reprover, in this audience: may I therefore, with your favourable permiſſion, preſume to be a commender, or, if you pleaſe, a pleader for the welfare of this ſacred Order, although myſelf an unworthy and inconſiderable member thereof. I ſay therefore,

I. God's honour is concerned in the ſafe, comfortable, and honourable eſtate of his prieſts; and that upon account of thoſe manifold relations, whereby they ſtand allied, appropriated, and devoted to himſelf.

Joel ii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 24.

They are in a peculiar manner his ſervants. *The ſervant of the Lord*, ſaith St. Paul, *muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach. The ſervant of the Lord;* who's that? are not all men God's ſervants? is not he Lord of all? Yes; but a Chriſtian prieſt, ſuch as Timothy was, is by way of excellency ſo ſtyled. All men owe ſubjection, obedience, and homage to God: but the prieſts are (his ὑπηρέται, his λειτουργοὶ) his miniſters, his officers, his immediate attendants, his domeſtics, as it were, and menial ſervants; that approach his perſon, that tread the courts of his houſe, that wear his proper badges, that are employed in his particular buſineſs. And is it then for God's honour, to ſuffer them to be abuſed, to want convenient ſuſtenance, to live in a mean and diſgraceful condition? Would it not redound to the diſcredit of an earthly prince, to permit, that the attendants on his perſon, the officers of his court, the executors of his edicts, ſhould have the leaſt injury offered them, ſhould fare ſcantly or coarſely, ſhould appear in a ſordid garb?

1 Cor. iv. 1. Rom. xv. 16.

Are they not therefore by eſpecial privileges guarded from ſuch inconveniences? And ſhall the great King and Lord of all the world be deemed leſs provident for, leſs indulgent (not to ſay leſs juſt) unto his ſervants? ſervants, I ſay, and thoſe not of the loweſt rank, nor appointed to the vileſt drudgeries; but ſuch as are employed in the moſt honourable charges, and are entruſted with his moſt eſpecial concernments. SERM. XII.

They are his ſtewards. *A biſhop*, ſaith St. Paul, *muſt be blameleſs, as the ſteward of God.* If the Church be οἶκος Θεοῦ, *God's houſe*, or *family*, as it is called, and the prieſts the οἰκονόμοι, the ſtewards of that houſe, the comptrollers of that family; it is ſurely no mean ſtation they obtain therein. The diſtribution of his bread, (the bread of life, his holy word,) and the diſpenſation of his moſt precious goods, (the holy myſteries,) are committed to their care and prudence. *Who then*, ſaith our Saviour, *is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom his Lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give them their portion of meat in due ſeaſon?* Who but the prieſts, who are therefore ſtyled both προεστῶτες, ἡγούμενοι, κυβερνήσεις, (*preſidents, guides, rulers,*) and ποιμένες, (*feeders* or *paſtors*) of the Church? Tit. i. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Vide Matt. xxiv. 45. 1 Cor. iv. 1. Luke xii. 42.

Yea, they are οἰκοδόμοι alſo, the builders of that houſe, founding it by initial converſion, rearing it by continued inſtruction, covering and finiſhing it by ſacramental obſignation of divine grace. *As a wiſe architect*, ſaith St. Paul, *I have laid the foundation, and another builds upon it.* 1 Cor. iii. 10.

They are συνεργοὶ Θεοῦ, *cooperators with God;* that manage his buſineſs, and drive on his deſigns: the ſolicitors of his affairs; the maſters of his requeſts: his heralds, that publiſh his decrees, denounce his judgments, proclaim his pardons and acts of grace unto his ſubjects; that blazon his titles, and defend his rightful authority in the world: yea, his miniſters of ſtate; the miniſters (I ſay, *abſit invidia,*) of his moſt glorious ſpiritual kingdom; (which is peculiarly denominated the kingdom of God;) the orderly adminiſtration of which, its advancement, its preſervation, and its enlargement, are eſpecially commended to their diligence and fidelity. 1 Cor. iii. 9. Κήρυκες.

SERM. VII

They are, laſtly, God's ambaſſadors[a], delegated by him to treat of peace, and ſolicit a fair correſpondence between heaven and earth. *Now then,* ſaith St. Paul, *we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be reconciled to God. As though God did beſeech you by us:* ſee, they manage God's concernments, and in a manner repreſent his perſon. At leaſt, if the Apoſtles were more properly God's ambaſſadors, the preſent miniſters of religion are his agents, and reſidents here among men, deſigned to purſue the ſame negociations commenced by them. Now you know by the law of nations, and common conſent of all men, all manner of ſecurity, good entertainment, and civil reſpect hath been ever acknowledged due to ambaſſadors, and public miniſters: their employment hath been eſteemed honourable, their perſons held ſacred and inviolable; and whatſoever diſcourteſy hath been ſhewed unto, or outrage committed upon them, hath been interpreted done to him from whom they derive their commiſſion, whoſe perſon they repreſent. And ſo truly the bad uſage of God's prieſts, if not directly and immediately, does yet really and truly, according to moral eſtimation, terminate on God himſelf, and reflect on his honour, and prejudice his religion; a due regard to which cannot be maintained, without proportionable reſpect to the miniſters thereof. The baſeſt of the people may ſerve to be prieſts to Jeroboam's calves, but not become the miniſtry of the God of Iſrael.

2 Cor. v. 20.

John xiii. 20. What you have done to theſe, &c. Matt. x. 40. and xxv. 40. He that receiveth you, receiveth him that ſent you.

Do we not ſee the reverence of civil government upheld more by the ſpecious circumſtances, than by the real neceſſity thereof; by the magnificent retinue, and ſplendid ornaments of princely dignity, than by the eminent benefits of peace and juſtice ſpringing thence? Shall not (not only the greateſt inward worth, but) the higheſt nobility, if baſely attired, badly attended, ſlenderly accommodated, paſs unregarded, yea diſregarded by us? men being ge-

[a] Vide Mal. ii. 7. For the prieſt's lips ſhould keep knowledge, and they ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth: for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of hoſts.

nerally either unable to diſcern, or unwilling to acknowledge excellency diveſted of ſenſible luſtre. Religion therefore muſt be well habited, or it will be ill reſpected: the prieſts muſt wear a comely (if not a coſtly) livery, or God their maſter's reputation will be impaired in popular fancy. SERM. XII.

Conſider David's reaſoning; *Lo, I dwell in a houſe of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains;* and compare ſuch diſcourſe therewith as this; and judge candidly, whether they have not ſome parity: Lo, my attendants are clad with the fineſt purple, God's miniſters are covered with the coarſeſt ſackcloth; my people ſurfeit with dainties, his ſervants pine away for ſcarcity; my courtiers are reſpectfully ſaluted, his prieſts ſcornfully derided; no man dare offend mine, every one may trample on his officers. 1 Chron. xvii. 1.

And leſt we ſhould imagine God himſelf altogether void of ſuch reſentments, or ſuch compariſons impertinent, conſider that diſdainful expreſſion of his; *If ye offer the blind for ſacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and ſick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy governor; will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept thy perſon? ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* The ſame teſtimonies of reſpect that we ſhew our governors, God, it ſeems, expects from us in all kinds, and may reaſonably much greater. Mal. i. 8.

Nor is it a matter of ſlight conſideration, how plentiful proviſion, in the policy deviſed and conſtituted by God himſelf, was made for the prieſts; how God aſſumes the immediate patronage of them, and appropriates the matter of their ſuſtenance unto himſelf. *The prieſts,* ſaith the Law, *the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi ſhall have no part nor inheritance with Iſrael; they ſhall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore they ſhall have no inheritance among their brethren: the Lord is their inheritance.* So that then, it ſeems, no man could withhold any part of the prieſts' maintenance, without ſacrilegious encroachment on God's own right, and robbing him of his due: (which is the greateſt ſecurity of an eſtate imaginable.) How likewiſe (next to the Deut. xviii. 1, 2.

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prince) the higheſt dignity and authority was then conferred on the prieſts: to them the interpretation of law, to them the deciſion of doubtful caſes did appertain; with ſevere injunctions to comply with their determinations. See how the buſineſs is inculcated. *If there ariſe a matter too hard for thee, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between ſtroke and ſtroke, being matters of controverſy within thy gates; then ſhalt thou ariſe and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God ſhall chooſe: and thou ſhalt come unto the prieſts the Levites, and unto the judge that ſhall be in thoſe days, and enquire; and they ſhall ſhew thee the ſentence of judgment. And thou ſhalt do according to the ſentence which they of that place, which the Lord ſhall chooſe, ſhall ſhew thee; and thou ſhalt obſerve to do according to all that they inform thee. According to the ſentence of the Law which they ſhall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they ſhall tell thee, thou ſhalt do: thou ſhalt not decline from the ſentence, which they ſhall ſhew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. And the man that will do preſumptuouſly, and will not hearken to the prieſt, that ſtandeth to miniſter there before the Lord thy God, even that man ſhall die, and thou ſhalt put away evil from Iſrael.* Obſerve with how eminent a power God then thought fit to endow his prieſts[a].

Deut. xvii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

And though we are not in all caſes obliged punctually to follow thoſe political preſcriptions; yet is the reaſon of them perpetual, and the example venerable: eſpecially ſince the cuſtom of all times, and the reaſon of all the world, doth in a ſort conſpire to back it.

The firſt prieſt we meet with in Scripture is Melchizedek; a king alſo; and ſuch a one, as the patriarch Abraham, (a prince alſo himſelf, and, what is ſomewhat more, juſt then a conqueror,) in the midſt of his triumphal heights, was not aſhamed to acknowledge his ſuperior, to honour him with a tribute of his ſpoils, and to receive a

Gen. xiv.

[a] Καὶ γὰρ ἐπόπται πάντων, καὶ δικασταὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητουμένων, καὶ κολασταὶ τῶν κατεγνωσμένων οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐτάχθησαν, ſaith Joſephus. The prieſts were conſtituted ſuperviſors of all things, and judges of controverſies, and puniſhers of offences. 2. *in Apionem.*

benediction from him. The next (if I miſtake not) is Po- SERM.
tipherah, prieſt of On, whoſe daughter was not thought XII.
by the king of Egypt an unequal match for Joſeph, his Gen. xli.
chief favourite, and the next in dignity to himſelf in that 45.
flouriſhing kingdom. (Though ſuch an alliance would perhaps be thought derogatory to the worſhips of our days.) The third is Revel, or Jethro, prieſt of Midian, the father-in-law likewiſe of the illuſtrious Moſes; a man as of approved wiſdom, ſo doubtleſs of conſiderable dignity too. And the next to him (in order of ſtory) is the venerable Aaron, no meaner a man, than the brother of him who was *king in Jeſhurun*. Thus all nations, wiſe and Deut. xxxiii. 5.
ignorant, civil and barbarous, were by one common inſtinct (as it were) of natural reaſon prompted, by conferring extraordinary privileges of honour and convenience on their prieſts, to expreſs their reverence of the Deity, and their affection to religion [a].

I will not ranſack the cloſets of antiquity, nor with needleſs oſtentation produce the Egyptian Hierophantæ, Porph. περὶ Ἀποχ. lib. iv. §. 16.
the Perſian Magi, the Gauliſh Druids, the Caliphs, and Cæſ. de bell. Gal. lib. vi.
Mufti's of other nations, to ſhew what preeminences of reſpect they enjoyed, what powerful ſway they bore in their reſpective countries; how the moſt weighty affairs, both of peace and war, were commonly directed by their oracular dictates. It ſhall ſuffice to obſerve, that the gallant Romans, (whoſe devout zeal to religion Polybius Lib. vi.
himſelf, no eſpecial friend of theirs, could not forbear to admire and applaud,) I ſay, that the moſt wiſe and valiant Romans did ſet ſo high a value upon the prieſtly order, that if their principal magiſtrates (the prætors and conſuls themſelves) did caſually meet with one of Veſta's prieſts, they cauſed immediately thoſe dreadful rods, the enſigns of their authority, to ſubmit; and they themſelves reſpectfully gave place, as if they meant to confeſs thoſe prieſts in a manner their betters [b]. Nor did they among

[a] Vid. Ariſtot. Pol. vii. 9. Οὔτε γὰρ γεωργὸν, οὔτε βάναυσον ἰερέα καταστατέον ὑπὸ γὰρ τῶν πολιτῶν περίπτει τιμᾶσθαι τοὺς θεούς.

[b] Πάντα τὰ πρόγματα Ῥωμαίοις εἰς τὸν Θεὸν ἀνήγετο. *Plut. in Marcello. Sen. in Contro.*

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them of the moſt noble extraction, and of the higheſt dignity in the commonwealth, (even after many glorious exploits achieved by them,) ſcornfully diſdain, but did rather ambitiouſly affect to be admitted into the college of prieſts: inſomuch that, after the diſſolution of the republic, the Emperors thought good to aſſume the pontifical dignity to themſelves, ſuppoſing the office too honourable, the title too magnificent for a ſubject. For they wiſely, it ſeems, and honeſtly adjudged it no debaſement of their quality, no diminution to their perſonal excellency, to be employed in the ſervice of the immortal Gods; whom they acknowledged the patrons of their country, the protectors of their ſafety: nor that they leſs deſerved of the public, who rightly ordered their religious devotions, than they who prudently adviſed in the ſenate, or fought valiantly in the field: for that the good ſucceſs of public undertakings did as much, or more, depend upon the favourable diſpoſition of Divine Providence, as upon the careful endeavour of human induſtry.

I cannot forbear to allege that ſo grave and pertinent ſpeech of Cicero, which is the exordium of his oration *ad Pontifices*: "*Cum multa divinitus, pontifices, a majoribus* "*noſtris inventa atque inſtituta ſint; tum nihil præcla-* "*rius, quam quod vos eoſdem et religionibus deorum im-* "*mortalium, et ſummæ reip. præeſſe voluerunt: ut am-* "*pliſſimi et clariſſimi cives rempubl. bene gerendo, reli-* "*giones ſapienter interpretando, remp. conſervarent.*" A wholeſome and politic inſtitution he thought it, conducible to the public good and ſafety, that the civil and ſacred authority ſhould be united in the ſame perſons; that it was as well for the intereſt of the ſtate, as for the credit of religion, that the prieſts ſhould be men of honour, or (which is all one) honourable men prieſts.

All which evinces plainly, that it is in no wiſe the reſult of a generous heart, (for what nation ever produced ſo many brave ſpirits as that?) but rather proceeds from an inconſiderate delicacy of humour, (or from a profane haughtineſs of mind,) to loathe, as now men do, and deſpiſe that employment, which in its own nature is of all

moſt noble and moſt beneficial to mankind. For if to be a courtier in a particular country, is of all others the moſt honourable relation; and to wait upon a mortal king, is accounted a moſt worthy function: to be peculiarly God's ſervant, and in religious addreſſes immediately to attend on him, muſt conſequently be the moſt excellent preferment in the world, which is God's kingdom [a]. And if to ſupply a man's bodily needs, to reſtore his liberty, to ſave his life, be works of generous beneficence; how much more is it ſo, by good conduct and inſtruction of men, to adorn their ſouls with virtue, to free them from the bondage of ſin, to reſcue them from eternal ruin? SERM. XII.

Our magnanimous anceſtors, who erected as well trophies of their invincible courage abroad, as monuments of their incomparable piety at home, and equally by both did purchaſe immortal renown to their ingrateful poſterity, (for not to imitate good example, is the greateſt ingratitude,) they, I ſay, were otherwiſe diſpoſed; to whoſe honeſt devotion we owe thoſe handſome privileges, and thoſe competent revenues, which the prieſthood ſtill enjoys; and which are ſo maligned by this untoward age, not leſs degenerate in ſpirit, than corrupt in manners: when all wiſdom, and virtue, and religion, are almoſt in moſt places grown ridiculous: when the ſerious uſe of reaſon is become (in vulgar opinion) the moſt impertinent and inſignificant thing in the world: when innocence is reputed a mere defect of wit and weakneſs of judgment; integrity a fond pertinacity of humour; conſtancy of mind and gravity of demeanour, a kind of ſullen moroſity or uncouth affectation of ſingularity; and all ſtrict practice of Chriſtian duty incurs the imputation of ſome newfound opprobrious name, one or other. No wonder then, when religion itſelf hath ſo much decayed in its love and eſteem, if the prieſts, its profeſſed guardians, do partake in

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preſumption; his minding others of their duty adjudged a forgetfulneſs of his own condition, or a diſorderly tranſgreſſing the due limits thereof: if he be not aſhamed of the truth, will not the truth be aſhamed of him? Shall he not prejudice more by the meanneſs of his garb, than further by the force of his reaſon, that good cauſe which he maintains? Will men reſpect his words, whoſe perſon they deſpiſe? Will they be willingly counſelled or patiently reproved by him, whom they eſteem, yea, whom they plainly ſee, ſo much their inferior? No: the ſame words, which proceed from the mouths of men in eminent dignity, are not the ſame when they are uttered by thoſe of baſe degree[a]. Weak and ineffectual are the moſt eloquent harangues of beggarly orators; obſcure, like themſelves, and unobſerved, the moſt notable dictates of poor, mercenary pedants. The authority of the ſpeaker doth uſually more incline, than the weight of the matter. It was the obſervation of the wiſe ſon of Sirach: *When a rich man ſlips, he hath many helpers; he ſpeaketh things not to be ſpoken, and yet men juſtify him: the poor man miſcarried, and they farther rebuked him; he ſpake diſcreetly, and yet could have no place. When a rich man ſpeaketh, every man holdeth his tongue; and his words they extol to the clouds: but if the poor man ſpeak, they ſay, Who is this? and if he ſtumble, they will help to overthrow him.* And Solomon himſelf notes the ſame: *The poor man's wiſdom is deſpiſed, and his words are not heard.* Not only thoſe that ſwell with pride and ſwim in plenty, but even the meaneſt of the people, will be apt to contemn his inſtructions, whom they perceive in few or no circumſtances of life to excel them. If the preacher's condition be not, as well as his pulpit, ſomewhat elevated above the loweſt ſtation, few will hear him, fewer mind his words, very few obey him. Job's caſe deſerves well to be conſidered. While he flouriſhed in wealth and reputation, all men attended to his counſel, and admired his diſcourſe.

Ecclus. xiii. 22, 23.

Κάλλιστα Μουσῶν φθίγγεται πλουτῶν ἀνήρ.

Eccleſ. ix. 16.

[a] Τὸ δ' ἀξίωμα, κἂν κακῶς λίγῃ, τὸ σὸν
Πείσει· λόγος γὰρ ἐκ τ' ἀδοξούντων ἰὼν,
Κἀκ τῶν δοκούντων αὐτὸς, οὐ ταυτὸν σθένει. *Eurip. in Hecuba.*

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The princes, ſaith he, *refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth: the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it bleſſed me; and when the eye ſaw me, it gave witneſs to me. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept ſilence at my counſel. After my words they ſpake not again, and my ſpeech dropped upon them.* So officiouſly attentive were all men to Job in his proſperity. But when the ſcale was turned, and he became depreſſed in eſtate, no man minded either him or his diſcourſe, except it were to deſpiſe and ſcorn both. *But now,* ſaith he, *they that are younger than I have me in deriſion, whoſe fathers I would have diſdained to have ſet with the dogs of my flock. I am their ſong, yea, I am their by-word. They abhor me, they fly far from me, and ſpare not to ſpit in my face: becauſe he hath looſed my cord, and afflicted me*[a]. If Job, a perſon who ſo equally and moderately, yea, ſo humbly, and courteouſly, and bountifully uſed his proſperity, as we find he did, was notwithſtanding in his adverſity ſo generally ſlighted and abhorred; what ſhall their lot be who never enjoyed thoſe advantages? what regard ſhall their wholeſome advice find? what efficacy their moſt pathetical exhortations obtain? what paſſion their faint breath raiſe in men's benumbed hearts? No more, certainly, than their mean condition ſhall procure among men either of friendſhip or eſteem.

Job xxix. 9, 10, 11. 21, 22.

Job xxx. 1. 9, 10, 11.

Job xxx. 25.

We ſee therefore how Almighty God, that he might conciliate credit unto, and infuſe a perſuaſive energy into the words of his Prophets and Apoſtles, was pleaſed to dignify them with extraordinary gifts of foretelling future events and doing miraculous works: their doctrine, it ſeems, (though of itſelf moſt reaſonable and plauſible,) being not ſufficient to convince the hearers, without ſome remarkable excellency in the teachers, challenging the people's awful regard, and exciting their attention. Otherwiſe how pitifully ſcant a draught thoſe poor fiſhers of men had caught by the common allurements

[a] Prov. xiv. 20. The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

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only of innocent life and rational diſcourſe, I leave you to imagine. And where ſuch extraordinary commendations are wanting, is it not reaſonable that the need of them ſhould be ſupplied by ordinary and probable expedients?

I might farther add, how a neceſſitous and deſpicable eſtate doth commonly not only diſturb the minds and deject the ſpirits of men, but diſtempereth alſo their ſouls, and vitiateth their manners; rendering them not only ſad and anxious, ſlaviſh and timorous, but greedy alſo and covetous, peeviſh and mutinous, rude and ignorant; engages them in ſordid company, and tempts them to unworthy courſes. From which one cauſe how ſcandalous effects, and how prejudicial to the Church's both honour and ſafety, have proceeded, I need not for to ſay, ſince woful experience too loudly proclaims it.

I might add, moreover, that the prieſts do confer to the good of the State; which is ſecured and advanced by the ſincere inſtruction of men in duties of obedience, juſtice, and fidelity; and by maintenance of good conſcience among men. So that, if things be rightly conſidered, it will be hard to find a better commonwealth's man, than a good miniſter.

Seeing therefore the good of the Church, upon various accounts, is ſo much concerned in the prieſts' encouragement, welfare, and reſpect, it is very fitting they ſhould have them. Which conſideration I conclude with that ſerious admonition of the Apoſtle to the Hebrews, wherein the ſubſtance of what hath been ſpoken on this point is contained: *Obey your rulers,* (or *guides,*) *and ſubmit to them: for they watch for your ſouls, as they that are to give an account; that they may do it with joy, and not with complaint: for this is unprofitable for you.* Ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ τοῦτο· that is, *for this pays no taxes, quits no ſcores; turns to no account, is nowiſe advantageous for you;* but rather (for there is a μείωσις in thoſe words) is hurtful and detrimental to you. But farther,

Heb. xiii. 17.

μὴ στενάζοντες.

III. Common equity, and the reaſon of the caſe exacts, that ſafety, competent ſubſiſtence, and fitting reſpect be allowed to the prieſts. If you conſider their

perſonal qualities; who, I pray, do [commonly] better deſerve thoſe advantages than they? Thoſe qualities, I ſay, which reſult from a liberal, a ſober, a modeſt education in the ſchools of wiſdom, and under the influences of good diſcipline. If birth (that is, at beſt, an imaginary relation to the gallantry of an anceſtor) entitle men to honour; if the cheap favours of fortune be ſo highly prized and admired; if riches (that is, the happy reſults of induſtry in trivial matters) do eaſily purchaſe reſpect: what may not they pretend to, whoſe conſtant (and not always unſucceſsful) endeavour it hath been to deſerve well, to cultivate their minds, and regulate their manners? SERM. XII.

True worth, indeed, is not confined to any particular order of men; yet I ſhould wrong none, by ſaying it is no where more plentifully to be found than in this. What is it that doth advance men's nature, that adorns their minds, that commends their perſons to eſpecial regard? Is it knowledge? *The prieſts' lips preſerve it;* their diſcourſe doth diffuſe it. Is it virtue? Whence have more or greater examples thereof proceeded than from them? Is it piety? It is their proper buſineſs; it hath been always, in ſome meaſure, their care to promote it: that ignorance and barbarity, diſſoluteneſs and irreligion, have not long ſince, like a deluge, overſpread the face of the world, none, I ſuppoſe, will be ſo unjuſt as to deny, in greateſt part, due to their vigilant endeavours. Even thoſe improvements of wit and eloquence, which are employed to their diſgrace and diſadvantage, muſt be acknowledged originally derived from them. Vide Orig. contra Celſ. l. iii. p. 129. Mal. ii. 7.

Faults they have had, and will always have; for they are men, and ſubject to the common imperfections of mortal nature: but that, perhaps, leſs and fewer than any other diſtinct ſort of men; that as it is their duty, ſo it hath been their practice, to excel in virtue; and that they have commonly, in effect, made good St. Ambroſe's words, *Debet præponderare vita ſacerdotis, ſicut præponderat gratia;* were not difficult to demonſtrate, if ſeemly to make compariſons, or to inſiſt upon ſo invidious a ſubject. Nor, were they greater than ever really they Epiſt. 82.

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have been, or than ever malice could miſrepreſent them, ſhould it be therefore equal, that the miſcarriages of ſome ſhould derogate from the reputation or prejudice the welfare of the whole order.

But to wave this plea; conſider their employment. Is there any office more laborious, more vexatious than theirs; accompanied with more weariſome toil, more ſolicitous care, more tedious attendance? They are deſervedly called *watchmen*, being conſtrained to ſtand always on the guard, to be always wakeful, attentive, and ready to warn the people of approaching dangers: and *ſhepherds* likewiſe, being forced to endure the various hardſhips of that uneaſy life, the inconveniences of all weathers, the nipping froſts and ſweltry heats, and all diverſities of irkſome travail; they muſt feed, they muſt guide, they muſt defend; they muſt ſeek the loſt, and reduce the ſtraying ſheep. What aſſiduity of ſtudy, what earneſt contention of ſoul are they obliged to uſe, in the continual inſtruction, exhortation, and reprehenſion of the people; in rectifying their judgments, ſatisfying their ſcruples, removing their prejudices, bearing their infirmities, and ſympathizing with their afflictions? It is they that are engaged, with all their might, to withſtand the prevailing encroachments of iniquity, to ſtop the progreſs of pernicious errors, to detect the falſe pretences of impoſtors, to confute the fallacies of ſophiſters, to repel the aſſaults of all adverſaries to the truth; yea, if need be, to expoſe, not only their deareſt contents of life, but even their lives themſelves, in the defence thereof.

Heb. xiii. 17.

Lib. vi.

Euſebius reports thus of Maximinus: Τοὺς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἄρχοντας μόνους, ὡς αἰτίους τῆς κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον διδασκαλίας, ἀναιρεῖσθαι προστάττει. *He commanded that only the governors of the Church* (that is, the *biſhops*) *ſhould be ſlaughtered, as the authors of the growth and prevalence of evangelical doctrine.* Neither was it a ſingular practice of that bloody tyrant; but, as a thing of courſe, it conſtantly follows, that wherever righteouſneſs and truth are violently impugned, the prieſts are ſure to taſte deepeſt of that bitter cup; that their goods be, in the firſt place, ſe-

queſtered and ſpoiled, their reputation ſtained, their per- SERM. XII.
ſons miſuſed, their lives ſacrificed to the perſecutor's outrageous malice.

Is it not reaſonable then, and equal, that they, who, for the ſervice of God and benefit of the Church, undergo ſuch difficulties, and are objected to ſo great hazards, ſhould be ſuſtained, ſhould be refreſhed by proportionable encouragements? Is it not barbarous uſage, to expect ſo hard duties from them, to impoſe ſuch heavy burthens on them, and yet to grudge any ſuitable comforts, any ſatisfactory rewards to them? Good king Hezekiah ſurely was not ſo minded, of whom it is ſaid, *He commanded the people that dwelt in Jeruſalem to give the portion of the Prieſts and Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord:* that is, they might be heartened to ſtudy, to teach, to perform the duties required of them by the divine law. And St. Paul thus rationally expoſtulates in the prieſts' behalf: *Who ever goeth to war at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, is it a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things? Is it a great thing?* do you think much of it? If you do, you are unreaſonable, you are unjuſt, you are ingrateful. And otherwhere he thus very emphatically admoniſhes: *We beſeech you, brethren, to* [a] *mind them which labour among you, and* [b] *preſide over you in the Lord, and that admoniſh you; and to eſteem them more than exceedingly* (ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ) *in love, for their work* (or, *for their office*) *ſake:* (ſo ἔργον frequently ſignifies in ſuch caſes.) And again: *Let the elders* (or *prieſts*, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι,) *which rule well, be counted worthy of double honour,* (or *of double recompence:* ſo τιμὴ alſo imports.) Prieſts, as ſo, for their office ſake, have honour and reward due to them; which, according to the good management of that office, are proportionably to be augmented and multiplied.

2 Chr. xxxi. 4.

1 Cor. ix. 7. 11.

Vide Rom. xv. 27.

1 Theſſ. v. 12, 13. [a] εἰδέναι. [b] καὶ προϊσταμένους.

1 Tim. v. 17.

But farther yet, abſtracting from both their perſonal worth and the merit of their ſervice, conſider their condition in this world, and ſee whether it doth not in equity

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challenge ſome reaſonable proviſion to be made for them. Are they not, by the nature of their profeſſion, ſecluded from all ordinary means of temporal advancement? Be not thoſe uſual inlets of wealth, the court, the camp, and the exchange, ſhut upon them, yea, barred againſt them, by thoſe inſuperable obſtacles of law and cuſtom? Can they grow rich by trade, or famous by feats of arms? May they plead for others? It is well if they be allowed to do it for themſelves before equal judges. Yet are they not men, endued with human paſſions and reſentments? Are they not citizens, partaking in the common intereſts of the weal public? Are they not ſenſible of the inconveniences, and capable of enjoying the benefits of this life? Are they not equally obliged, and would they not be glad, as well as others, to be in a capacity to requite courteſies, to help relations, to gratify friends, to relieve the poor, to expreſs reſpectively their humanity and their gratitude? Skill they not to uſe the goods of fortune (or rather the gifts of Providence) with as much diſcretion, as much ſobriety, as much honour as others? Compare things righteouſly, and let reaſon judge; let experience be examined; let thoſe eternal monuments of their piety, their charity, their hoſpitality, declare and teſtify. Shall, laſtly, the fruits of painful ſtudy, the improvement of hopeful parts, the flower of vigorous age and ſtrength ſpent in the public ſervice, tend only hither, to put a man into a ſtate of ſtruggling with extreme contempt and penury? If this be not, what, I pray you, is monſtrous iniquity?

Since therefore it appears (upon ſo many ſeveral ſcores) reaſonable, that Almighty God ſhould undertake the protection and aſſert the honour of his prieſts, we may not only praiſe the goodneſs, but approve alſo the wiſdom of this promiſe, and by the contemplation thereof ſtrengthen our faith in reliance thereon. To which purpoſe one conſideration more may very much conduce, and withal may provoke our gratitude to celebrate his truth and faithfulneſs in making good, as well as his goodneſs and wiſdom in making, this promiſe; viz. the conſidering

how continually hitherto God hath been pleaſed effectually to *clothe his prieſts with ſalvation*, to provide abundantly for their ſafety, their accommodation, their reſpect in this world, and to deliver them from the oppoſite inconveniences. SERM. XII.

If we reflect our thoughts on the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, (not more diſmal for ſuffering than glorious for piety,) it is admirable to ſee how ſincerely and paſſionately the Chriſtian people did then love their prieſts and paſtors; how liberally, out of their ſlender ſtock and the ſhipwrecks of their ſpoiled fortunes, they contributed to their maintenance; what exceeding veneration they bore them; with what incredible alacrity they ſubmitted to the moſt ſevere diſciplines enjoined by them; how willingly they followed them, though leading into the jaws of death and cruel torture: ſo that, although it was then neceſſary for the Chriſtian prieſts to undergo the greateſt hardſhips, according to the deſign of Chriſtian religion, (which was to be propagated, not by terror of power, nor by politic artifice, but by the invincible faith, reſolution, and patience, of the profeſſors and teachers thereof;) yet never more may they have ſeemed to thrive and proſper, than in that juncture of time, when they enjoyed the univerſal good-will and applauſe of good people, when they unconſtrainedly embraced affliction for righteouſneſs ſake, and acquired thereby the certain fruition of a more excellent ſalvation.

But in the ſucceeding times, when Chriſtianity, breaking out of the clouds of perſecution, began to ſhine over all with brighteſt luſtre; of the glorious and happy fruits of that illuſtrious triumph none did partake more fully than they who had ſuſtained the hardeſt brunts of the foregoing conflict, and had been the principal cauſes of the ſucceſs. Then the joyful acclamations of the faithful people reſounded in the praiſe of their victorious champions: then did the emperors themſelves, with arms outſtretched and hearts enlarged, with affection embrace the authors of their happy converſion: then all laws prejudicial to their welfare were reſcinded, and new ones were ſubſtituted, abundantly providing for their ſecurity, honeſt

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livelihood, and due reverence; which in progreſs of time, not in the Roman empire only, but in all other nations, (that afterwards did entertain Chriſtianity,) were nowiſe impaired, but were rather ampliated and fortified by the pious favour of princes: the barbarous Goths, and Vandals, and Lombards, being no ſooner endued with any degree of civility, or any ſenſe of religion, than poſſeſſed with a hearty reverence of their biſhops and prieſts.

And ever ſince, (which is not to be imputed, as ſome raſhly, if not impiouſly aver, to the prevalence of Antichriſtian iniquity, but rather to the providence of Divine Benignity; ever ſince, I ſay,) till the late commotions and alterations in Chriſtendom, they have been the guardians of others' ſafety, not themſelves deprived of protection; have abounded with wealth, rather than wanted ſuſtenance; have been the objects of envy, more than of contempt. Princes have loved and cheriſhed them, have relied upon their advice, and entruſted them with their higheſt concernments. Nobles have not been aſhamed to yield them place. The ſacerdotal robe hath been often dyed with purple; and the ſons of mighty monarchs have not thought themſelves degraded by entering into their order. And if in ſome particular places (before or ſince thoſe changes) their condition hath not been ſo high and plentiful, yet hath it been (almoſt ever) tolerable; the countenance of authority and the reſpect of the people being in good degree vouchſafed them. Even in thoſe churches, which till this day groan under the oppreſſion of infidel princes, the prieſts (by the free permiſſion of thoſe princes) retain their juriſdiction in a manner as great as ever; and withal enjoy a maintenance not altogether inconſiderable.

So favourable hitherto hath God been unto his prieſts, ſo faithful to his promiſe: which doth oblige us to thank him; which may encourage us to hope in him; which may arm us with confidence againſt the preſent ill-will of thoſe that wiſh, and againſt the practices of thoſe that deſign our ruin.

It is true, this promiſe is not affixed to all parts of time,

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to all particularities of place, to all determinate circumſtances of things. The prieſts may, now and then, here and there, in this or that, ſuffer highly; they may be ejected, be plundered, be degraded, as experience hath ſhewed us. But they may be alſo ſoon reſtored, repoſſeſſed, readvanced, and (I had almoſt ſaid) revenged too, as the like experience doth aſſure us. It is not impoſſible, I confeſs, we may relapſe into the ſame, or into a more calamitous eſtate; the obſtinate diſaffections of men threaten it, and our own miſcarriages more dangerouſly: yet the moſt offenſive of theſe (which many honeſt men diſlike, and moſt men exclaim againſt) have been in as bitter terms complained of in almoſt the firſt ages. "*Inhiant poſſeſſionibus, prædia excolunt, auro incubant,* Sulp. Sev. "*quæſtui per omnia ſtudent,*" ſaid a devout writer of lib. i. c. 43. eccleſiaſtical hiſtory about 1300 years ago. And ſo much no man (without extreme uncharitableneſs and falſehood) can in ſo general terms impute to the preſent clergy: notwithſtanding which, God did continue to vouchſafe his protection to them. They were ſometimes, (by the inundations of barbarous people,) and we may again, (by national concuſſions,) be ſeverely chaſtiſed for our faults: yet were not they, nor ſhall we be (at leaſt every where and for ever) utterly rejected. God may *viſit our tranſ-* Pſ. lxxxix. *greſſions with the rod, and our iniquity with ſtripes: ne-* 32, 33, 34. *verthleſs his lovingkindneſs will he not utterly take from us, nor ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail. His covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips.* God may for a time hide his face from us; but he will not for ever turn his back upon us: the honour of the Prieſthood may for a while be overclouded in ſome part of the world; but ſhall never totally be eclipſed, nor ſwallowed up in a perpetual night. While God continues his reſidence in Sion, and defends his Church againſt *the gates of Hell* and *powers of darkneſs*; while religion retains any ſway in the hearts of men, and truth poſſeſſes any room upon earth; the prieſts ſhall not be left deſtitute and naked, but everlaſtingly *be clothed*

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with ſalvation. Which that it may (to the glory of G and good of his Church) more ſurely come to paſs, let convert this promiſe into a prayer, and ſay with So

2 Chron. vi. 41. mon, *Now therefore ariſe, O Lord God, thou and the of thy ſtrength: let thy prieſts, O Lord God, be cloth with ſalvation, and let thy ſaints rejoice in goodn* Amen.

SERMON XIII.

NOT TO OFFEND IN WORD AN EVIDENCE OF A HIGH PITCH OF VIRTUE.

JAMES iii. 2.

If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man.

THIS ſentence ſtands in the head of a diſcourſe concerning the tongue, (that doubtful engine of good and evil,) wherein how excellent benefits, and how grievous miſchiefs, it, as rightly or perverſely wielded, is apt to produce, how it is both a ſweet inſtrument of all goodneſs, and a ſharp weapon of all iniquity, is poſitively laid down, and by fit compariſons illuſtrated. But ſecluding all relation to the context, the words may well be conſidered ſingly by themſelves: and as ſuch they inſtruct us, aſſerting a certain truth; they direct us, implying a good duty. They aſſert that man to be perfect, who offends not in ſpeech; and they conſequently imply, that we ſhould ſtrive to avoid offending therein: for to *be perfect*, and to *go on to perfection*, are precepts, the obſervance whereof is incumbent on us. We ſhall firſt briefly explain the aſſertion, and then declare its truth; afterwards we ſhall preſs ſomewhat couched in the duty.

Deut. xviii. 13. Luke vi. 40. Matt. v. 48. xix. 21. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Heb. vi. 1.

To *offend* originally ſignifies to *impinge*, that is, to ſtumble, or hit dangerouſly upon ſomewhat lying croſs our way, ſo as thereby to be caſt down, or at leaſt to be diſordered in our poſture, and ſtopt in our progreſs:

Εἴ τις ἐν λόγῳ οὐ πταίει.

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whence it is well transferred to denote our being through any incident temptation brought into ſin, whereby a man is thrown down, or bowed from his upright ſtate, and interrupted from proſecuting a ſteady courſe of piety and virtue. By an uſual and appoſite manner of ſpeaking, our tenor of life is called *a way*, our converſation *walking*, our actions *ſteps*, our obſerving good laws *uprightneſs*, our tranſgreſſion of them *tripping*, *faultering*, *falling*.

Pſal. xxxvii. 23, 24.

By *not offending in word*, we may eaſily then conceive to be underſtood ſuch a conſtant reſtraint, and ſuch a careful guidance of our tongue, that it doth not tranſgreſs the rules preſcribed unto it by Divine law, or by good reaſon; that it thwarteth not the natural ends and proper uſes for which it was framed, to which it is fitted; ſuch as chiefly are promoting God's glory, our neighbour's benefit, and our own true welfare.

Jam. i. 4.

By *a perfect man* is meant a perſon accompliſhed and complete in goodneſs, one of ſingular worth and integrity, a brave and excellent man, who, as to the continual tenor of his life, is free from all notorious defects, and heinous faults; like David, *fulfilling all God's will*, and *having reſpect to all God's commandments*; like Zachary and Elizabeth, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs*. Thus was Noah, thus was Abraham, thus was Job perfect. This is the notion of *perfection* in holy Scripture: not an abſolute exemption from all blemiſh of ſoul, or blame in life; for ſuch a perfection is inconſiſtent with the nature and ſtate of man here, where none with modeſty or with truth can ſay, *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my ſin*; where every man muſt confeſs with Job, *If I juſtify myſelf, mine own mouth ſhall condemn me; if I ſay, I am perfect, it ſhall prove me perverſe*. For, *There is not*, as the Preacher aſſures, *a juſt man upon earth, that doeth good, and ſinneth not*; and, *In many things we offend all*, is our Apoſtle's aſſertion, immediately preceding my text; which words may ſerve to expound theſe. *In many things*, ſaith he, *we offend all*; that is, there is no man abſolutely perfect:

Acts xiii. 22. Pſal. cxix. 6. Luke i. 6. Gen. vi. 9. xvii. 1. Job i. 1. Prov. xx. 9. Job ix. 20. Eccleſ. vii. 20.

but *if any man offend not in word*, (that is, if a man constantly govern his tongue well,) *that man is perfect*; perfect in such a kind and degree as human frailty doth admit; he is eminently good; he may be reasonably presumed upright and blameless in all the course of his practice; *able*, as it follows, *to bridle the whole body*, that is, qualified to order all his actions justly and wisely. So that in effect the words import this; that a constant governance of our speech according to duty and reason is a high instance and a special argument of a throughly sincere and solid goodness. SERM. XIII.

The truth of which aphorism may from several considerations appear.

1. A good governance of speech is a strong evidence of a good mind; of a mind pure from vicious desires, calm from disorderly passions, void of dishonest intentions. For since speech is a child of thought, which the mind always travaileth and teemeth with, and which after its birth is wont in features to resemble its parent; since every man naturally is ambitious to propagate his conceits, and without a painful force cannot smother his resentments; since especially bad affections, like stum or poison, are impetuous and turgid, so agitating all the spirits, and so swelling the heart, that it cannot easily compose or contain them; since a distempered constitution of mind, as of body, is wont to weaken the retentive faculty, and to force an evacuation of bad humours; since he that wanteth the principal wisdom of well ordering his thoughts, and mastering his passions, can hardly be conceived so prudent, as long to refrain, or to regulate their dependence, speech; considering these things, I say, it is scarce possible, that he which commonly thinks ill, should constantly either be well silent, or speak well. To conceal fire, to check lightning, to confine a whirlwind, may perhaps be no less feasible, than to keep within due compass the exorbitant motions of a soul, wherein reason hath lost its command, so that *qua data porta*, where the next passage occurs, they should not rush forth, and vent themselves. A vain mind naturally will bubble forth or fly

Eccles. xix. 11. A fool travaileth with a word, as a woman in labour of a child.

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out in frothy expreſſions; wrath burning in the breaſt will flame out, or at leaſt ſmoke through the mouth; rancorous impoſthumes of ſpite and malice will at length diſcharge purulent matter; luſt boiling within will ſoon foam out in lewd diſcourſe. If the fountain itſelf is polluted, or infected, how can the ſtreams be clear or wholeſome? *How can ye, being evil, ſpeak good things?* ſaith our Lord; *for from the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh. A good man,* addeth he, *out of the good treaſure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treaſure bringeth forth evil things:* ἐκβάλλει πονηρὰ, *he caſteth forth ill things,* as a fountain doth its waters by a natural and neceſſary ebullition. It is true, that in ſome particular caſes, or at ſome times, a foul heart may be diſguiſed by fair words, or covered by demure reſervedneſs: ſhame, or fear, or crafty deſign, may often repreſs the declaration of ill thoughts and purpoſes. But ſuch fits of diſſimulation cannot hold; men cannot abide quiet under ſo violent conſtraints; the inteſtine jars, or unkindly truces, between heart and tongue (thoſe natural friends) cannot be perpetual, or very durable: no man can hold his breath long, or live without evaporating through his mouth thoſe ſteams of paſſion which ariſe from fleſh and blood. *My heart was hot within me, while I was muſing, the fire burned; then ſpake I with my tongue,* ſaith David, expreſſing the difficulty of obſtructing the eruption of our affections into language. Hence it is, that ſpeech is commonly judged the trueſt character of the mind, and the ſureſt teſt of inward worth; as that which diſcloſeth the *hidden man of the heart,* which unlocketh the cloſets of the breaſt, which draws the ſoul out of her dark receſſes into open light and view, which rendereth our thoughts viſible, and our intentions palpable. Hence, *Loquere, ut te videam,* Speak, that I may ſee you, or know what kind of man you are, is a ſaying which all men, at firſt meeting, do in their hearts direct one to another: neither commonly doth any man require more to ground a judgment upon concerning the worth or ability of another, than opportunity of hearing him to

Matth. xii. 34.

Pſal. xxxix. 3.

Ἀνδρὸς χαρακτὴρ ἐκ λόγου γνωρίζεται. 1 Pet. iii. 4.

diſcourſe for a competent time: yea, often before a man hath ſpoken ten words, his mind is caught, and a formal ſentence is paſſed upon it. Such a ſtrict affinity and connection do all men ſuppoſe between thoughts and words.

2. From hence, that the uſe of ſpeech is itſelf a great ingredient into our practice, and hath a very general influence upon whatever we do, may be inferred, that whoever governeth it well, cannot alſo but well order his whole life. The extent of ſpeech muſt needs be vaſt, ſince it is nearly commenſurate to thought itſelf, which it ever cloſely traceth, widely ranging through all the immenſe variety of objects; ſo that men almoſt as often ſpeak incogitantly, as they think ſilently. Speech is indeed the rudder that ſteereth human affairs, the ſpring that ſetteth the wheels of action on going; the hands work, the feet walk, all the members and all the ſenſes act by its direction and impulſe; yea, moſt thoughts are begotten, and moſt affections ſtirred up thereby: it is itſelf moſt of our employment, and what we do beſide it, is however guided and moved by it. It is the profeſſion and trade of many, it is the practice of all men, to be in a manner continually talking. The chief and moſt conſiderable ſort of men manage all their concernments merely by words; by them princes rule their ſubjects, generals command their armies, ſenators deliberate and debate about the great matters of state: by them advocates plead cauſes, and judges decide them; divines perform their offices, and miniſter their inſtructions; merchants ſtrike up their bargains, and drive on all their traffic. Whatever almoſt great or ſmall is done in the court or in the hall, in the church or at the exchange, in the ſchool or in the ſhop, it is the tongue alone that doeth it: it is the force of this little machine, that turneth all the human world about. It is indeed the uſe of this ſtrange organ which rendereth human life, beyond the ſimple life of other creatures, ſo exceedingly various and compounded; which creates ſuch a multiplicity of buſineſs, and which tranſacts it; while by it we communicate our ſecret conceptions, tranſuſing

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them into others; while therewith we inſtruct and adviſe one another; while we conſult about what is to be done, conteſt about right, diſpute about truth; while the whole buſineſs of converſation, of commerce, of government, and adminiſtration of juſtice, of learning, and of religion, is managed thereby; yea, while it ſtoppeth the gaps of time, and filleth up the wide intervals of buſineſs, our recreations and divertiſements (the which do conſtitute a great portion of our life) mainly conſiſting therein, ſo that, in compariſon thereof, the execution of what we determine and all other action do take up ſmall room: and even all that uſually dependeth upon foregoing ſpeech, which perſuadeth, or counſelleth, or commandeth it. Whence the province of ſpeech being ſo very large, it being ſo univerſally concerned, either immediately as the matter, or by conſequence as the ſource of our actions, he that conſtantly governeth it well may juſtly be eſteemed to live very excellently.

3. To govern the tongue well is a matter of exceeding difficulty, requiring not only hearty goodneſs, but great judgment and art, together with much vigilance and circumſpection; whence the doing it argues a high pitch of virtue. For ſince the tongue is a very looſe and verſatile engine, which the leaſt breath of thought doth ſtir, and ſet on going any way, it cannot but need much attention to keep it either in a ſteady reſt, or in a right motion. Since numberleſs ſwarms of things roving in the fancy do thence inceſſantly obtrude themſelves upon the tongue, very much application of mind and great judgment are requiſite to ſelect out of them thoſe few which are good and fit, rejecting all that is bad, and improper to be ſpoken. Since continually temptations occur provoking or alluring to miſcarriage in this kind, (for beſide internal propenſions and commotions of ſoul, every object we behold, every company we are engaged in, every accident befalling us, doth ſuggeſt ſomewhat inviting thereto; the condition of our neighbour moving us, if high, to flatter, if low, to inſult; our own fortune prompting, if proſperous, to boaſt, if croſs, to murmur; any action drawing

from us, if it pleaſeth us, fond admiration, if it diſliketh, harſh cenſure: ſince, I ſay, we are thus at every turn obnoxious to ſpeak amiſs,) it muſt be matter of huge ſkill and caution, of mighty induſtry and reſolution, to decline it. We for that purpoſe need to imitate that earneſt and watchful care of the holy Pſalmiſt, which he thus expreſſeth; *I have*, ſaith he, *purpoſed that my mouth ſhall not offend*: and, *I ſaid*, ſaith he again, *I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.* And thus to maintain a conſtant guard over his heart and ways, thus in conſequence thereof to curb and rule his ſpeech well, muſt aſſuredly be the mark of a very good perſon. Eſpecially conſidering, that, Pſal. xvii. 3. Pſal. xxxix. 1.

4. Irregular ſpeech hath commonly divers more advantages for it, and fewer checks upon it, than other bad practice hath. A man is apt, I mean, to ſpeak ill with leſs diſſatisfaction and regret from within; he may do it with leſs control and leſs hazard from without, than he can act ill. Bad actions are groſs and bulky, taking up much time, and having much force ſpent on them, whence men eaſily obſerve and conſider them in themſelves and others: but ill words are ſubtile and tranſient, ſoon born, and as ſoon deceaſed; whence men raſhly utter them without much heed before them, or much reflection after them. Bad actions have alſo uſually viſible effects immediately conſequent on them: but words operate inſenſibly and at diſtance; ſo that men hardly diſcern what will follow them, or what they have effected. There are alſo frequent occaſions of ſpeaking ill upon preſumption of ſecrecy, and thence of indiſturbance and impunity; yea, doing ſo is often entertained with complacence, and encouraged with applauſe: the vileſt abuſes of ſpeech (even blaſphemy, treaſon, and ſlander themſelves) may be ſafely whiſpered into ears, which will receive them with pleaſure and commendation. Bad language alſo in moſt caſes is neither ſtrictly prohibited, nor ſeverely chaſtiſed by human laws, as bad action is. Whence ordinarily the guilt of this miſbehaviour ſeems little or none; and perſons

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much practiſing it, both in their own conceit, and in the opinion of others, do often paſs for innocent. Men indeed here will hardly diſcern any rule, or acknowledge any obligation: the tongue they deem is free, and any words may be diſpenſed with: it is ſufficient if they abſtain from doing groſs wrong or miſchief, they have a right and liberty to ſay any thing. *Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* ſo are men commonly prone to ſay, with thoſe in the Pſalm. Hence whoſoever, notwithſtanding ſuch encouragements to offend herein, and ſo few reſtraints from it, doth yet carefully forbear it, governing his tongue according to rules of duty and reaſon, may juſtly be reputed a very good man. Farthermore,

Pſal. xii. 4.

5. Whereas moſt of the enormities, the miſchiefs, and the troubles, whereby the ſouls of men are defiled, their minds diſcompoſed, and their lives diſquieted, are the fruits of ill-governed ſpeech; it being that chiefly which perverteth juſtice, which ſoweth diſſenſions, which raiſeth all bad paſſions and animoſities, which embroileth the world in ſeditions and factions, by which men wrong and abuſe, deceive and ſeduce, defame and diſgrace one another, whereby conſequently innumerable vexations and diſturbances are created among men; he that by well governing his ſpeech preſerveth himſelf from the guilt, diſengageth his mind and life from the inconveniences of all ſuch evils, (from the diſcreet and honeſt management thereof enjoying both innocence and peace,) muſt neceſſarily be as a very wiſe and happy, ſo a very good and worthy perſon.

6. His tongue alſo ſo ruled cannot but produce very good fruits of honour to God, of benefit to our neighbour, of comfort to himſelf: it will be ſweet and pleaſant, it will be wholeſome and uſeful; endearing converſation, cementing peaceful ſociety, breeding and nouriſhing love, inſtructing and edifying, or cheering and comforting the hearers. His *tongue is health;* his *mouth is a well and tree of life;* his *lips diſperſe knowledge;* he *ſhall be ſatisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth; every man ſhall kiſs his lips.* Such, as the Wiſe Man telleth us, are

Prov. xii. 18. x. 11. xv. 4. xii. 14. xiii. 2, 3. xv. 23. xxiv. 26.

the effects of innocent, ſober, and well-ordered diſcourſe; SERM. XIII.
the which do much commend their author, and declare the excellent virtue of that tree from which ſuch fruits do grow.

7. Laſtly, the obſervation how unuſual this practice is, in any good degree, may ſtrongly aſſure the excellency thereof. For the rarer, eſpecially in morals, any good thing is, the more noble and worthy it is; that rarity arguing ſomewhat of peculiar difficulty in the attainment or the achievement thereof. Nothing is more obvious to common experience, than that perſons, who in the reſt of their demeanour and dealings appear blameleſs, yea, who in regard to other points of duty would ſeem nice and preciſe, are extremely peccant in this kind. We may ſee divers, otherwiſe much reſtraining and much denying themſelves, who yet indulge themſelves a ſtrange licentiouſneſs in ſpeaking whatever their humour or their paſſion dictates. Many, in other reſpects harmleſs, (who would not for any thing ſmite or ſlay folks,) we may obſerve with their tongue to commit horrible outrages upon any man that comes in their way. Frequently perſons very punctual in their dealings are very unjuſt in their language, cheating and robbing their neighbour of his reputation by envious detraction and hard cenſure. They who abhor ſhedding a man's blood will yet, without any ſcruple or remorſe, by calumnious tales and virulent reproaches, aſſaſſinate his credit, and murder his good name, although to him perhaps far more dear and precious than his life. Commonly ſuch as are greatly ſtaunch in other enjoyments of pleaſure, are enormouſly intemperate in ſpeaking, and very incontinent of their tongue: men in all other parts of morality rigorouſly ſober, are often in this very wild and diſſolute. Yea, not ſeldom we may obſerve, that even mighty pretenders to godlineſs, and zealous practiſers of devotion, cannot forbear ſpeaking things plainly repugnant to God's law, and very prejudicial to his honour. Thus it is obſervable to be now; and thus we may ſuppoſe that it always hath been. So of his time St. Hierome (or rather St. Paulinus, in his ex-

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cellent Epiſtle to Celantia) teſtifies: [a] *Such a luſt* (ſaith he, concerning the ill governance of ſpeech) *of this evil hath invaded the minds of men, that even thoſe, who have far receded from other vices, do yet fall into this, as into the laſt ſnare of the devil.* So it appears, that among all ſorts of good practice, the ſtrict governance of the tongue is leaſt ordinary, and conſequently, that it is moſt admirable and excellent. And this is all I ſhall ſay for confirmation of the point aſſerted.

Now then, as it is our duty to aim at perfection, or to endeavour the attainment of integrity in heart and life, ſo we ſhould eſpecially labour to govern our tongue, and guard it from offence. To which purpoſe it is requiſite, that we ſhould well underſtand and conſider the nature of thoſe ſeveral offences to which ſpeech is liable, together with the ſpecial pravity, deformity, and inconvenience of each: for did we know and weigh them, we ſhould not ſurely either like or dare to incur them.

The offences of ſpeech are many and various in kind; ſo many as there be of thought and of action, unto which they do run parallel: accordingly they well may be diſtinguiſhed from the difference of objects which they do ſpecially reſpect. Whence, 1. ſome of them are committed againſt God, and confront piety; 2. others againſt our neighbour, and violate juſtice, or charity, or peace; 3. others againſt ourſelves, infringing ſobriety, diſcretion, or modeſty; or, 4. ſome are of a more general and abſtracted nature, rambling through all matters, and croſſing all the heads of duty. It is true, that in moſt, or in all offences of ſpeech, there is a complication of impiety, iniquity, and imprudence; for that by all ſorts of ill ſpeaking we ſin againſt God, and break his commandment; we injure our neighbour, at leaſt by contagion and bad example; we abuſe ourſelves, contracting guilt, and expoſing ourſelves to puniſhment: alſo the general

[a] Tanta hujus mali libido mentes hominum invaſit, ut etiam qui procul ab aliis vitiis receſſerunt, in iſtud tamen, quaſi in extremum diaboli laqueum, incidant. *Ad Celant.*

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vices of ſpeech (unadviſedneſs and vanity) do conſtantly adhere to every bad word: yet commonly each evil ſpeech hath a more direct and immediate aſpect upon ſome one of thoſe objects, (God, our neighbour, or ourſelves,) and is peculiarly repugnant to one of thoſe capital virtues (piety, charity, and ſobriety) unto which all our duty is reduced. Now according to this diſtinction, I ſhould, if time would give leave, deſcribe and diſſuade particularly all theſe ſorts of offence: but (ſince I muſt be reſpectful to patience, and careful myſelf not to offend in ſpeech) I ſhall confine the reſt of my preſent Diſcourſe to the firſt ſort, the offences againſt piety; and even of them I ſhall (waving the reſt) only touch two or three, inſinuating ſome reaſons why we ſhould eſchew them. Theſe are,

I. Speaking blaſphemouſly againſt God, or reproachfully concerning religion, or to the diſgrace of piety, with intent to ſubvert men's faith in God, or to impair their reverence of him. There hath been a race of men, (and would to God that race were not even till now continued) concerning whom the Pſalmiſt ſaid, *They ſpeak loftily, they ſet their mouth againſt the heavens;* who, like the proud Sennacherib, *lift up their eyes, and exalt their voice againſt the Holy One of Iſrael;* who, with the profane Antiochus, *ſpeak marvellous things againſt the God of gods.* This of all impieties is the moſt prodigiouſly gigantic, the moſt ſignal practice of enmity towards God, and downright waging of war againſt heaven. Of all *weapons formed againſt God,* the tongue moſt notoriouſly doth impugn him; for we cannot reach heaven with our hands, or immediately aſſault God by our actions: other ill practice indeed obliquely, or by conſequence diſhonoureth God, and defameth goodneſs; but profane diſcourſe is directly levelled at them, and doth immediately touch them, as its formal objects. Now doing thus argueth an extremity both of folly and naughtineſs: for he that doeth it, either believeth the exiſtence of God, and the truth of religion; or he diſtruſts them. If he doth believe them, what a deſperate

(Pſ. lxxviii. 19. Num. xxi. 5. Job xxxiv. 37.) Pſ. lxxiii. 8, 9. Iſa. xxxvii. 23. 2 Chron. xxxii. 19. Dan. xi. 36. Iſa. liv. 17.

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madneſs is it in him, adviſedly to invite certain miſchief to his home, and pull down heavieſt vengeance on his own head, by oppoſing the irreſiſtible power, and provoking the inflexible juſtice of God! What an abominable villany and baſeneſs is it thus to abuſe God's immenſe goodneſs and mercy, offering ſuch deſpite to the Author of his being, and free Donor of all the good he enjoys! What a monſtrous conſpiracy is it of ſtupidity and perverſeneſs in him, thus wilfully to defy his own welfare, to forfeit all capacity of happineſs; to precipitate and plunge himſelf into a double hell, that of bitter remorſe here, that of endleſs pain hereafter! But if he that reproacheth God and religion be ſuppoſed diſtruſtful of their being and reality, neither ſo is he excuſable from like degrees of folly and pravity: for, beſide the wild extravagance of ſuch diſbelief, againſt legions of cogent arguments and pregnant teſtimonies, againſt all the voice of nature and faith of hiſtory, againſt the ſettled judgment of wiſe and ſober perſons who have ſtudied and conſidered the point, againſt the current tradition of all ages, and general conſent of mankind; all which to withſtand, no leſs demonſtrateth high indiſcretion than arrogance; beſide alſo the palpable ſillineſs which he diſplays, in cauſeleſsly (or for no other cauſe than ſoothing a fantaſtic humour) drawing upon himſelf the anger and hatred of all men who are concerned for the intereſts of their religion, thruſting himſelf into great dangers and miſchiefs thence imminent to him both from private zeal and public law; beſide, I ſay, theſe evident follies, there is an unſufferable inſolence and horrible malice apparent in this practice; for it is no leſs than the height of inſolence, thus to affront mankind in matters of higheſt conſideration, and deepeſt reſentment with it; not only thwarting its common notions, but vilifying the chief objects of its higheſt reſpect and affection, of its main care and concernment; ſo making the fierceſt invaſion that can be on its credit, and charging it with greateſt fondneſs. Who can endure that He, whom he apprehends to be his grand Parent, his beſt Friend and Benefactor, his great Patron and Sove-

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reign, ſhould in downright terms be defamed or diſparaged? Who can patiently bear that, wherein he placeth his utmoſt hopes and ſupreme felicity, to be expreſsly ſlighted or ſcorned? Who can take the offering to do this, otherwiſe than for a moſt injurious reflection upon his judgment and his practice? If he cannot believe in God, he may let them alone who do: if he will not practiſe religion, he may forbear to perſecute it. He cannot pretend any zeal; it is therefore only pride that moves him to diſturb us. So may every man with all the reaſon in the world complain againſt the profane talker. Seeing alſo it is moſt evident, that hearty reverence of God, and a conſcientious regard to religion, do produce great benefits to mankind, being indeed the main ſupports of common honeſty and ſobriety, the ſole curbs, effectually reſtraining men from unjuſt fraud and violence, from brutiſh luſts and paſſions; ſince apparently religion preſcribeth the beſt rules, and impoſeth the ſtrongeſt engagements to the performance of thoſe actions, whereby not only men's private welfare is promoted, and ordinary converſation is ſweetened, and common life is adorned, but alſo whereby public order and peace are maintained; ſince, as Cicero with good reaſon judged, *piety being removed, it is probable that juſtice itſelf* (of all virtues the beſt guarded and fortified by human power) *could not ſubſiſt, no faith could be ſecured, no ſociety could be preſerved among men;* it being manifeſtly vain to fancy, that aſſuredly without religious conſcience any one will be a good ſubject, a true friend, or an honeſt man; or that any other conſideration can induce men to prefer duty to their prince, the proſperity of their country, fidelity toward their friends or neighbours, before their own preſent intereſts and pleaſure: ſince, I ſay, the credit of religion is ſo very beneficial and uſeful to mankind, it is plain that he muſt be exceedingly ſpiteful and malicious, who ſhall by profane diſcourſe endeavour to ſupplant or ſhake it. He that ſpeaketh againſt God's providence hath aſſuredly a pique at goodneſs, and would not have it predominant in the hearts of men.

Haud ſcio an, pietate adverſus Deos ſublata, fides etiam, et ſocietas humani generis, et una excellentiſſima virtus juſtitia tollatur. *Cic.*

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He that diſparages religion doth certainly take his aim againſt virtue, and would not have it practiſed in the world: his meaning plainly is, to effect, if he can, that men ſhould live like beaſts in foul impurities, or like fiends in miſchievous iniquities. Such an one therefore is not to be taken as a ſimple embracer of error, but as a ſpiteful deſigner againſt common good. For indeed, were any man aſſured (as none can upon ſo much as probable grounds think it) that religion had been only deviſed by men, as a ſupplemental aid to reaſon and force, (drawing them, whom the one could not perſuade, nor the other compel, to the practice of things conducible to the public weal;) that it were merely an implement of policy, or a knack to make people loyal to their prince, upright in their dealings, ſober in their converſations, moderate in their paſſions, virtuous in all their doings; it were yet a moſt barbarous naughtineſs and inhumanity in him to aſſay the overthrow thereof, with the defeating ſo excellent purpoſes: he that ſhould attempt it, juſtly would deſerve to be reputed an enemy to the welfare of mankind, to be treated as a peſtilent diſturber of the world.

Ut quos ratio non poſſet, eos ad officium religio duceret. *Cic.*

II. Another like offence againſt piety is, to ſpeak looſely and wantonly about holy things, (things nearly related to God or to religion,) to make ſuch things the matter of ſport and mockery, to play and trifle with them. But of this I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak in another Diſcourſe.

III. Another grand offence againſt piety is, raſh and vain ſwearing in common diſcourſe; an offence which now ſtrangely reigns and rages in the world, paſſing about in a ſpecious garb and under glorious titles, as a gentile and graceful quality, a mark of fine breeding, and a point of high gallantry. Who, forſooth, now is the brave ſpark and complete gentleman, but he that hath the ſkill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a ſkill! how mad a confidence!) to lard every ſentence with an oath or a curſe; making bold at every turn to ſalute God, fetching him down from heaven to avouch any idle prattle, to ſecond any giddy paſſion, to concern himſelf in any trivial affair of his; yea, calling and challenging the

Almighty to damn and deſtroy him! But ſomewhat to repreſs theſe fond conceits and vile practices, let us, I pray, conſider, SERM. XIII.

1. That ſwearing thus is moſt expreſsly and ſtrictly prohibited to us. *I ſay unto you, Swear not at all: but let your converſation be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil:* ſo our Lord forbids it. *But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not—leſt you enter into condemnation:* ſo doth St. James warn againſt it. And is it not then prodigious, that in Chriſtendom any man ſhould affect to break laws ſo plain and ſo ſevere; that it ſhould paſs here not only for a tolerable, but even for a commendable practice, to violate ſo manifeſt and ſo important a duty; that ſo directly to thwart our Lord himſelf ſhould be a thing not in uſe only, but in credit and requeſt among Chriſtians? What more palpable affront could be offered to our religion, and to all that is ſacred among us? For what reſpect or force can we imagine reſerved to religion, while a practice ſo indiſputably oppoſite thereto, in a high degree, is ſo current and prevalent? Matt. v. 34. 37. Jam. v. 12.

2. Again, according to the very nature and reaſon of things, it is evidently an intolerable profaneneſs, thus unadviſedly to make addreſſes and appeals to God, invoking his teſtimony, and demanding his judgment about trifles; far more ſuch, then it were a high preſumption and encroachment upon the majeſty of a prince, on every petty occaſion to break into his preſence, and to aſſail his ears, dragging him to hear and determine concerning it. Whence the very light of nature condemns this practice, and even heathens have loudly declared againſt it, as derogatory to the reverence of the duty, and unſuitable to the gravity of a worthy man.

3. Swearing indeed is by our holy Oracles worthily repreſented to us as an eſpecial piece of worſhip and devotion toward God; wherein, duly performed, we piouſly acknowledge his chief attributes and ſingular prerogatives: (his being every where preſent, and conſcious of all we ſay or do; his goodneſs and fidelity, in favouring

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truth and protecting right; his juſtice, in rewarding veracity and equity, in avenging falſehood and iniquity; his being the ſupreme Lord of all perſons, and laſt Judge in all cauſes; to ſignify and avow theſe things to God's glory, ſwearing was inſtituted, and naturally ſerveth:) wherefore, as all other acts of devotion, ſo this grand one eſpecially ſhould never be performed without all ſerious conſideration and humble reverence; the cauſe ſhould be certainly juſt and true, the matter worthy and weighty, the manner grave and ſolemn, the mind framed to earneſt attention, and furniſhed with devout affections. Thoſe conditions are always carefully to be obſerved, which the Jer. iv. 2. Prophet intimates when he chargeth thus; *Thou ſhalt ſwear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteouſneſs.* It is therefore horrible mockery and profanation of a moſt ſacred ordinance, when men preſume to uſe it without any care or conſideration, without any reſpect or awe, upon any ſlight or vain occaſion.

4. The doing ſo is alſo very prejudicial to human ſociety; for the deciſion of right, the ſecurity of government, and the preſervation of peace, do much depend upon an awful regard to oaths; and therefore upon their being only uſed in due manner and ſeaſon: the ſame do greatly ſuffer by the contempt or diſregard of them, and conſequently by their common and careleſs uſe. They are the ſureſt bonds by which the conſciences of men are tied to the atteſtation of truth and obſervance of faith; the which as by rare and reverent uſe they are kept firm and faſt, ſo by frequent and negligent application of them (by their proſtitution to every light and toyiſh matter) they are quite diſſolved, or much ſlackened. Whence the public ſeems much concerned that this enormity ſhould be retrenched. For if oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance ſignify? If men are wont to dally with ſwearing every where, can they be expected to be ſtrict and ſerious therein at the bar, or in the church? Will they regard the teſtimony of God, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at one time, when as every where continually (upon any,

upon no occaſion) they dare to confront and contemn them? SERM. XIII.

5. This way of ſwearing is alſo a very uncivil and unmannerly practice. It is not only a groſs rudeneſs toward the main body of men, who juſtly reverence the name of God, and loathe ſuch abuſes thereof; not only an inſolent defiance to the common profeſſion and law of our country, which diſallows and condemns it; but it is very odious and offenſive to any particular ſociety, if at leaſt there be one ſober perſon therein: for to any ſuch perſon (who retains a ſenſe of goodneſs, or is anywiſe concerned for God's honour) no language or behaviour can be more diſguſtful; nothing can more grate the ears or fret the heart of ſuch an one, than this kind of talk: to give him the lie were a compliment, to ſpit in his face were an obligation, in compariſon thereto. Wherefore it is a wonder, that any perſon, having in him a ſpark of ingenuity, or at all pretending to good manners, ſhould find in his heart or deign to uſe it.

6. This practice alſo much derogateth from the credit of him that uſeth it, rendering the truth of whatever he ſays in reaſon and juſtice ſuſpected. For he that is ſo void of conſcience as to ſwear vainly, what can engage him to ſpeak truly? He that is ſo looſe in one ſuch point of obedience to God and reaſon, why ſhould we conceive him in regard to another?

7. It can be ſurely no wrong to diſtruſt him, ſince he implies himſelf not to be, even in his own opinion, a credible perſon; ſince he judges not his own bare affirmation to deſerve belief. For why, if he takes his word to be competently good, doth he back it with ſuch aſſeverations? why unprovoked calls he God to witneſs, if he thinks his own honeſty ſufficient to aſſure the truth of what he ſays? An honeſt man, methinks, ſhould ſcorn thus to invalidate his own credit, or to detract from the authority of his word, which ſhould ſtand firm upon itſelf, and not want an oath to ſupport it.

Tantus in te ſit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes. *Hier.*

8. To excuſe this, the ſwearer muſt be forced to confeſs another ugly fault in ſpeaking, that is, impertinence,

SERM. XIII. or uſing of waſte and inſignificant words; to be charged wherewith he is indeed however unavoidably liable. For oaths, as they paſs commonly, are mere excreſcences of ſpeech, which do nothing elſe but encumber and deform it: they embelliſh diſcourſe, juſt as a wen or a ſcab does beautify a face; as a ſpot or a patch do adorn a garment. For to what purpoſe, I pray, is God's name haled into our idle talk? Why ſhould we ſo often mention him, when we never mean any thing about him? Into every ſentence to foiſt a dog, or a horſe, would altogether be as proper and pertinent. Theſe ſuperfluous words ſignify nothing, but that the ſpeaker little ſkilleth the uſe of ſpeech, or the rule of converſation, but meaneth to prate any thing without wit or judgment; that his fancy is very beggarly, and craves the aid of any impertinency to relieve it. One would think that a man of ſenſe ſhould grutch to lend his ears, or incline his attention, to ſuch putid ſtuff; that without nauſeating he ſhould not endure to ſee men laviſh time, and ſquander breath ſo frivolouſly.

Περὶ ἀναπλήρωσιν λόγου. Hier.

9. In fine, this offence is particularly moſt inexcuſable, in that it ſcarce hath any temptation to it, or bringeth with it any advantage; ſo that it is unaccountable what (beſide mere vanity or perverſeneſs) ſhould diſpoſe men thereto. It gratifieth no ſenſe, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour: for the ſound of it is not very melodious, nor ſurely was any man ever preferred for it, or got an eſtate thereby; it rather to any good ear maketh a horrid and jarring noiſe, it rather produceth diſpleaſure, damage, and diſgrace. Wherefore of all dealers in ſin the ſwearer is apparently the ſillieſt, and maketh the worſt bargains for himſelf; for he ſinneth gratis, and, like thoſe in the Prophet, *ſelleth his ſoul for nothing*. An epicure hath ſome reaſon, and an extortioner is a man of wiſdom, if compared to him; for they enjoy ſome pleaſure, or acquire ſome gain here, in lieu of their ſalvation hereafter. But he offends heaven, and abandons happineſs, he knows not why, nor for what; a fond humour poſſeſſes him, he inconſiderately follows a herd of fops, he affects to play the ape; that is all he can ſay for himſelf. Let me be

Iſa. lii. 3.

pardoned, if juſt indignation againſt a wickedneſs ſo contemptible, ſo heinous, and ſo ſenſeleſs, and withal ſo notorious, and ſo riſe among us, doth extort from me language ſomewhat tart and vehement.

If men would then but a little conſider things, ſurely this ſcurvy faſhion would be ſoon diſcarded, much fitter for the ſcum of the people than for the flower of the gentry; yea rather, much below any man endued with a ſcrap of reaſon, not to ſay with a grain of religion. Could we bethink ourſelves, certainly modeſt, ſober, and pertinent diſcourſe would appear far more generous and manly, than ſuch wild hectoring God Almighty, ſuch rude inſulting over the received laws, ſuch ruffianly ſwaggering againſt ſobriety and goodneſs. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their anceſtors, (that gallant courage, that ſolid wiſdom, that noble courteſy, which firſt advanced their families, and ſevered them from the vulgar,) this degenerate wantonneſs and dirtineſs of ſpeech would return to the dunghill, or rather (which God grant) would be quite baniſhed from the world.

Finally, as to this whole point, about not offending in our ſpeech againſt piety, we ſhould conſider, that as we ourſelves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly deſigned and framed to ſerve and glorify our Maker; (it being withal the greateſt perfection of our nature, and the nobleſt privilege thereof ſo to do;) ſo eſpecially our tongue and ſpeaking faculty were given us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to expreſs our love and gratitude toward him, to celebrate his praiſes, to acknowledge his benefits, to promote his honour and ſervice. This conſequently is the moſt proper and worthy uſe thereof; from this it becomes in effect what the Pſalmiſt ſo often terms it, our *glory*, and the beſt member we have; as that whereby we far excel all creatures here below; that whereby we conſort with the bleſſed angels above, in diſtinct utterance of praiſe to our Creator. Wherefore applying it to any impious diſcourſe, (tending anywiſe to the diſhonour of God, or diſparagement of religion,) is a moſt unnatural abuſe thereof, and a vile in-

Pſ. xvi. 9. xxx. 12. lvii. 8. cviii. 1.

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gratitude toward him that gave it to us. From which and from all other offences, God in his mercy preſerve us all, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, unto whom for ever with heart and tongue let us ſtrive to render all glory and praiſe. *Amen.*

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SERMON XIV.

AGAINST FOOLISH TALKING AND JESTING.

EPHES. v. 4.

—Nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient.

MORAL and political aphoriſms are ſeldom couched in ſuch terms, that they ſhould be taken as they ſound preciſely, or according to the wideſt extent of ſignification; but do commonly need expoſition, and admit exception: otherwiſe frequently they would not only claſh with reaſon and experience, but interfere, thwart, and ſupplant one another. The beſt maſters of ſuch wiſdom are wont to interdict things, apt by unſeaſonable or exceſſive uſe to be perverted, in general forms of ſpeech, leaving the reſtrictions, which the caſe may require or bear, to be made by the hearer's or interpreter's diſcretion: whence many ſeemingly formal prohibitions are to be received only as ſober cautions. This obſervation may be particularly ſuppoſed applicable to this precept of St. Paul, which ſeemeth univerſally to forbid a practice commended (in ſome caſes and degrees) by philoſophers as virtuous, not diſallowed by reaſon, commonly affected by men, often uſed by wiſe and good perſons; from which conſequently if our religion did wholly debar us, it would ſeem chargeable with ſomewhat too uncouth auſterity and ſourneſs: from imputations of which kind as in its temper and frame it is really moſt free, (it never quenching natural

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light, or cancelling the dictates of ſound reaſon, but confirming and improving them;) ſo it carefully declinet them, enjoining us, that [a] *if there be any things* προσφιλῆ, (*lovely*, or grateful to men,) *any things* εὔφημα, (*of good report* and repute,) *if there be any virtue and any praiſe*, (any thing in the common apprehenſions of men held worthy and laudable,) we ſhould *mind thoſe things*, that is, ſhould yield them a regard anſwerable to the eſteem they carry among rational and ſober perſons.

οἱ μήτ' εἰπόντες μηδὲν γελοῖον, τοῖς τι λέγουσι δυσχεραίνοντες, ἄγροικοι καὶ σκληροὶ δοκοῦσιν εἶναι. *Ariſt. Eth.* iv. 8.

[a] Phil. iv. 8.

Whence it may ſeem requiſite ſo to interpret and determine St. Paul's meaning here concerning εὐτραπελία, (that is, facetious ſpeech or raillery, by our tranſlators rendered *jeſting*,) that he may conſiſt with himſelf, and be reconciled to Ariſtotle, who placeth this practice in the rank of virtues; or that religion and reaſon may well accord in the caſe; ſuppoſing, that if there be any kind of facetiouſneſs innocent and reaſonable, conformable to good manners, (regulated by common ſenſe, and conſiſtent with the tenor of Chriſtian duty, that is, not tranſgreſſing the bounds of piety, charity, and ſobriety,) St. Paul did not intend to diſcountenance or prohibit that kind.

For thus expounding and limiting his intent, we have ſome warrant from himſelf, ſome fair intimations in the words here. For firſt, what ſort of facetious ſpeech he aimeth at, he doth imply by the fellow he coupleth therewith; μωρολογία, ſaith he, ἢ εὐτραπελία, *fooliſh talking*, or *facetiouſneſs*: ſuch facetiouſneſs therefore he toucheth as doth include folly, in the matter or manner thereof. Then he farther determineth it, by adjoining a peculiar quality thereof, unprofitableneſs or impertinency; τὰ μὴ ἀνήκοντα, *which are not pertinent*, or conducible to any good purpoſe: whence may be collected, that it is a frivolous and idle ſort of facetiouſneſs which he condemneth.

But however manifeſt it is, that ſome kind thereof he doth earneſtly forbid: whence, in order to the guidance of our practice, it is needful to diſtinguiſh the kinds, ſevering that which is allowable from that which is un-

lawful; that ſo we may be ſatisfied in the caſe, and not on the one hand ignorantly tranſgreſs our duty, nor on the other trouble ourſelves with ſcruples, others with cenſures, upon the uſe of warrantable liberty therein. SERM. XIV.

And ſuch a reſolution ſeemeth indeed eſpecially needful in this our age, (this pleaſant and jocular age,) which is ſo infinitely addicted to this ſort of ſpeaking, that it ſcarce doth affect or prize any thing near ſo much; all reputation appearing now to veil and ſtoop to that of being a wit: to be learned, to be wiſe, to be good, are nothing in compariſon thereto; even to be noble and rich are inferior things, and afford no ſuch glory. Many at laſt, to purchaſe this glory, to be deemed conſiderable in this faculty, and enrolled among the wits, do not only *make ſhipwreck of conſcience*, abandon virtue, and forfeit all pretences to wiſdom; but neglect their eſtates, and proſtitute their honour: ſo to the private damage of many particular perſons, and with no ſmall prejudice to the public, are our times poſſeſſed and tranſported with this humour. To repreſs the exceſs and extravagance whereof, nothing in way of diſcourſe can ſerve better, than a plain declaration when and how ſuch a practice is allowable or tolerable; when it is wicked and vain, unworthy of a man endued with reaſon, and pretending to honeſty or honour.

This I ſhall in ſome meaſure endeavour to perform.

But firſt it may be demanded what the thing we ſpeak of is, or what this facetiouſneſs doth import? To which queſtion I might reply as Democritus did to him that aſked the definition of a man, *It is that which we all ſee and know:* any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, than I can inform him by deſcription. It is indeed a thing ſo verſatile and multiform, appearing in ſo many ſhapes, ſo many poſtures, ſo many garbs, ſo variouſly apprehended by ſeveral eyes and judgments, that it ſeemeth no leſs hard to ſettle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat alluſion to a known ſtory, or in ſeaſonable application of

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a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale: sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound: sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression: sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude: sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting, or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense: sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it: sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being: sometimes it riseth from a lucky hitting upon what is strange, sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose: often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way, (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by,) which by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto. It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar: it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in remote conceits applicable; a notable skill, that he can dexterously accommodate them to the purpose before him; together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes of imagination. (Whence in Aristotle such persons are termed ἐπιδέξιοι, *dexterous* men; and εὔτροποι, men of facile or versatile manners, who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all things to themselves.) It also procureth delight, by gratifying curiosity with its rareness or semblance of diffi-

Eadem quæ, si imprudentibus excidunt, stulta sunt, si simulamus, venusta creduntur. *Quint.* vi. 3.

Et hercle omnis salse dicendi ratio in eo est, ut aliter quam est rectum verumque dicatur. *Quint.*

Eth. iv. 8.

Εὐτράπελος λέγεται ὁ ποικίλος, ὁ παντοδαπὸς,

culty; (as monsters, not for their beauty, but their rarity; as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure;) by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts; by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirit; by provoking to such dispositions of spirit in way of emulation or complaisance; and by seasoning matters, otherwise distasteful or insipid, with an unusual, and thence grateful tang.

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ὁ ἄστατος, ὁ εὔκολος, ὁ πάντα γινόμενος. *Chris. in Eph. Or.* 17.

But saying no more concerning what it is, and leaving it to your imagination and experience to supply the defect of such explication, I shall address myself to shew, first, when and how such a manner of speaking may be allowed; then, in what matters and ways it should be condemned.

I. Such facetiousness is not absolutely unreasonable or unlawful, which ministereth harmless divertisement and delight to conversation: (harmless, I say, that is, not entrenching upon piety, not infringing charity or justice, not disturbing peace.) For Christianity is not so tetrical, so harsh, so envious, as to bar us continually from innocent, much less from wholesome and useful pleasure, such as human life doth need or require. And if jocular discourse may serve to good purposes of this kind; if it may be apt to raise our drooping spirits, to allay our irksome cares, to whet our blunted industry, to recreate our minds being tired and cloyed with graver occupations; if it may breed alacrity, or maintain good humour among us; if it may conduce to sweeten conversation and endear society; then is it not inconvenient or unprofitable. If for those ends we may use other recreations, employing on them our ears and eyes, our hands and feet, our other instruments of sense and motion; why may we not as well to them accommodate our organs of speech and interior sense? Why should those games which excite our wits and fancies be less reasonable, than those whereby our grosser parts and faculties are exercised? Yea, why are not those more reasonable, since they are performed in a manly way, and have in them a smack of reason; seeing also they may be so managed, as not only to divert and

Δοκεῖ δὲ ἡ ἀνάπαυσις καὶ ἡ παιδιὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ εἶναι ἀναγκαῖον. *Arist. Eth.* iv. 8.

Danda est remissio animis; meliores acrioresque requieti surgent, &c. *Sen. de Tranq.* 15.

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pleaſe, but to improve and profit the mind, rouſing and quickening it, yea, ſometimes enlightening and inſtructing it, by good ſenſe conveyed in jocular expreſſion?

—ridentem dicere verum Quid vetat?

It would ſurely be hard, that we ſhould be tied ever to knit the brow and ſqueeze the brain, (to be always ſadly dumpiſh, or ſeriouſly penſive,) that all divertiſement of mirth and pleaſantneſs ſhould be ſhut out of converſation: and how can we better relieve our minds, or relax our thoughts, how can we be more ingenuouſly cheerful, in what more kindly way can we exhilarate ourſelves and others, than by thus *ſacrificing to the graces*, as the ancients called it? Are not ſome perſons always, and all perſons ſometimes, uncapable otherwiſe to divert themſelves, than by ſuch diſcourſe? Shall we, I ſay, have no recreation? or muſt our recreations be ever clowniſh or childiſh, conſiſting merely in ruſtical efforts, or in petty ſleights of bodily ſtrength and activity? Were we, in fine, obliged ever to talk like philoſophers, aſſigning dry reaſons for every thing, and dropping grave ſentences upon all occaſions, would it not much deaden human life, and make ordinary converſation exceedingly to languiſh? Facetiouſneſs therefore in ſuch caſes, and to ſuch purpoſes, may be allowable.

Θὺι τωῖς χάριστ ita Plato Xenocratem moroſiorem monuit.

2. Facetiouſneſs is allowable, when it is the moſt proper inſtrument of expoſing things apparently baſe and vile to due contempt. It is many times expedient, that things really ridiculous ſhould appear ſuch, that they may be ſufficiently loathed and ſhunned; and to render them ſuch is the part of a facetious wit, and uſually can only be compaſſed thereby. When to impugn them with downright reaſon, or to check them by ſerious diſcourſe, would ſignify nothing; then repreſenting them in a ſhape ſtrangely ugly to the fancy, and thereby raiſing deriſion at them, may effectually diſcountenance them. Thus did the prophet Elias expoſe the wicked ſuperſtition of thoſe who worſhipped Baal: *Elias*, ſaith the text, *mocked them, and ſaid, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is purſuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he ſleepeth, and muſt be awaked.* By which one pregnant

1 Kings xviii. 27.

inſtance it appeareth, that reaſoning pleaſantly-abuſive in ſome caſes may be uſeful. The holy Scripture doth not indeed uſe it frequently; (it not ſuiting the Divine ſimplicity and ſtately gravity thereof to do ſo;) yet its condeſcenſion thereto at any time ſufficiently doth authoriſe a cautious uſe thereof. When ſarcaſtical twitches are needful to pierce the thick ſkins of men, to correct their lethargic ſtupidity, to rouſe them out of their drowſy negligence; then may they well be applied: when plain declarations will not enlighten people, to diſcern the truth and weight of things, and blunt arguments will not penetrate, to convince or perſuade them to their duty; then doth reaſon freely reſign its place to wit, allowing it to undertake its work of inſtruction and reproof. SERM. XIV.

3. Facetious diſcourſe particularly may be commodious for reproving ſome vices and reclaiming ſome perſons; (as ſalt for cleanſing and curing ſome ſores.) It commonly procureth a more eaſy acceſs to the ears of men, and worketh a ſtronger impreſſion on their hearts, than other diſcourſe could do. Many who will not ſtand a direct reproof, and cannot abide to be plainly admoniſhed of their fault, will yet endure to be pleaſantly rubbed, and will patiently bear a jocund wipe; though they abominate all language purely bitter or ſour, yet they can reliſh diſcourſe having in it a pleaſant tartneſs: you muſt not chide them as their maſter, but you may gibe with them as their companion: if you do that, they will take you for pragmatical and haughty; this they may interpret friendſhip and freedom. Moſt men are of that temper; and particularly the genius of divers perſons, whoſe opinions and practices we ſhould ſtrive to correct, doth require not a grave and ſevere, but a free and merry way of treating them. For what can be more unſuitable and unpromiſing, than to ſeem ſerious with thoſe who are not ſo themſelves, or demure with the ſcornful? If we deſign either to pleaſe or vex them into better manners, we muſt be as ſportful in a manner, or as contemptuous as themſelves. If we mean to be heard by them, we muſt talk in their own faſhion, with humour and jollity: if we will

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inſtruct them, we muſt withal ſomewhat divert them: we muſt ſeem to play with them, if we think to convey any ſober thoughts into them. They ſcorn to be formally adviſed or taught; but they may perhaps be ſlily laughed and lured into a better mind. If by ſuch complaiſance we can inveigle thoſe dotterels to hearken to us, we may induce them to conſider farther, and give reaſon ſome competent ſcope, ſome fair play with them. Good reaſon may be apparelled in the garb of wit, and therein will ſecurely paſs, whither in its native homelineſs it could never arrive: and being come thither, it with eſpecial advantage may impreſs good advice; making an offender more clearly to ſee, and more deeply to feel his miſcarriage; being repreſented to his fancy in a ſtrain ſomewhat rare and remarkable, yet not ſo fierce and frightful. The ſeverity of reproof is tempered, and the reprover's anger diſguiſed thereby. The guilty perſon cannot but obſerve, that he who thus reprehends him is not diſturbed or out of humour, and that he rather pitieth than hateth him; which breedeth a veneration to him, and imparteth no ſmall efficacy to his wholeſome ſuggeſtions. Such a reprehenſion, while it forceth a ſmile without, doth work remorſe within; while it ſeemeth to tickle the ear, doth ſting the heart. In fine, many whoſe foreheads are brazed and hearts ſteeled againſt all blame, are yet not of proof againſt deriſion; divers, who never will be reaſoned, may be raillied into better order: in which caſes raillery, as an inſtrument of ſo important good, as a ſervant of the beſt charity, may be allowed.

4. Some errors likewiſe in this way may be moſt properly and moſt ſucceſsfully confuted; ſuch as deſerve not, and hardly can bear a ſerious and ſolid confutation. He that will conteſt things apparently decided by ſenſe and experience, or who diſavows clear principles of reaſon, approved by general conſent, and the common ſenſe of men, what other hopeful way is there of proceeding with him, than pleaſantly to explode his conceits? To diſpute ſeriouſly with him were trifling; to trifle with him is the proper courſe: ſince he rejecteth the grounds of rea-

ſoning, it is vain to be in earneſt: what then remains but to jeſt with him? To deal ſeriouſly, were to yield too much reſpect to ſuch a baffler, and too much weight to his fancies; to raiſe the man too high in his courage and conceit; to make his pretences ſeem worthy the conſidering and canvaſſing. Briefly, perverſe obſtinacy is more eaſily quelled, petulant impudence is ſooner daſhed, ſophiſtical captiouſneſs is more ſafely eluded, ſceptical wantonneſs is more ſurely confounded in this, than in the ſimple way of diſcourſe. SERM. XIV.

5. This way is alſo commonly the beſt way of defence againſt unjuſt reproach and obloquy. To yield to a ſlanderous reviler a ſerious reply, or to make a formal plea againſt his charge, doth ſeem to imply, that we much conſider or deeply reſent it; whereas by pleaſant reflection on it we ſignify, the matter only deſerves contempt, and that we take ourſelves unconcerned therein. So eaſily without care or trouble may the brunts of malice be declined or repelled.

6. This way may be allowed in way of counterbalancing and in compliance to the faſhion of others. It would be a diſadvantage unto truth and virtue, if their defenders were barred from the uſe of this weapon; ſince it is that eſpecially whereby the patrons of error and vice do maintain and propagate them. They being deſtitute of good reaſon, do uſually recommend their abſurd and peſtilent notions by a pleaſantneſs of conceit and expreſſion, bewitching the fancies of ſhallow hearers, and inveigling heedleſs perſons to a liking of them: and if, for reclaiming ſuch people, the folly of thoſe ſeducers may in like manner be diſplayed as ridiculous and odious, why ſhould that advantage be refuſed? It is wit that wageth the war againſt reaſon, againſt virtue, againſt religion; wit alone it is that perverteth ſo many, and ſo greatly corrupteth the world: it may therefore be needful, in our warfare for thoſe deareſt concerns, to ſort the manner of our fighting with that of our adverſaries, and with the ſame kind of arms to protect goodneſs, whereby they do aſſail it. If wit may happily ſerve under the ban-

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ner of truth and virtue, we may impreſs it for that ſervice; and good it were to reſcue ſo worthy a faculty from ſo vile abuſe. It is the right of reaſon and piety to command that and all other endowments; folly and impiety do only uſurp them: juſt and fit therefore it is, to wreſt them out of ſo bad hands to revoke them to their right uſe and duty.

It doth eſpecially ſeem requiſite to do it in this age, wherein plain reaſon is deemed a dull and heavy thing. When the mental appetite of men is become like the corporeal, and cannot reliſh any food without ſome piquant ſauce, ſo that people will rather ſtarve, than live on ſolid fare; when ſubſtantial and ſound diſcourſe findeth ſmall attention or acceptance; in ſuch a time, he that can, may in complaiſance, and for faſhion's ſake, vouchſafe to be facetious: an ingenious vein coupled with an honeſt mind may be a good talent: he ſhall employ wit commendably, who by it can further the intereſts of goodneſs, alluring men firſt to liſten, then inducing them to conſent unto its wholeſome dictates and precepts.

Since men are ſo irreclaimably diſpoſed to mirth and laughter, it may be well to ſet them in the right pin, to divert their humour into the proper channel, that they may pleaſe themſelves in deriding things which deſerve it, ceaſing to laugh at that which requireth reverence or horror.

It may alſo be expedient to put the world out of conceit, that all ſober and good men are a ſort of ſuch lumpiſh or ſour people, that they can utter nothing but flat and drowſy ſtuff; by ſhewing them, that ſuch perſons, when they ſee cauſe, in condeſcenſion, can be as briſk and ſmart as themſelves; when they pleaſe, can ſpeak pleaſantly and wittily as well as gravely and judiciouſly. This way at leaſt, in reſpect to the various palates of men, may for variety ſake be ſometimes attempted, when other means do fail: when many ſtrict and ſubtile arguings, many zealous declamations, many wholeſome ſerious diſcourſes have been ſpent, without effecting the extirpation of bad principles, or converſion of thoſe who abet them;

this courſe may be tried, and ſome perhaps may be reclaimed thereby. SERM. XIV.

7. Farthermore, the warrantableneſs of this practice in ſome caſes may be inferred from a parity of reaſon, in this manner: If it be lawful, (as by the beſt authorities it plainly doth appear to be,) in uſing rhetorical ſchemes, poetical ſtrains, involutions of ſenſe in allegories, fables, parables, and riddles, to diſcoaſt from the plain and ſimple way of ſpeech; why may not facetiouſneſs, iſſuing from the ſame principles, directed to the ſame ends, ſerving to like purpoſes, be likewiſe uſed blameleſsly? If thoſe exorbitancies of ſpeech may be accommodated to inſtill good doctrine into the head, to excite good paſſions in the heart, to illuſtrate and adorn the truth, in a delightful and taking way; and facetious diſcourſe be ſometime notoriouſly conducible to the ſame ends; why, they being retained, ſhould it be rejected? eſpecially conſidering how difficult often it may be, to diſtinguiſh thoſe forms of diſcourſe from this, or exactly to define the limits which ſever rhetoric and raillery. Some elegant figures and tropes of rhetoric (biting ſarcaſms, ſly ironies, ſtrong metaphors, lofty hyperboles, paronomaſies, oxymorons, and the like, frequently uſed by the beſt ſpeakers, and not ſeldom even by ſacred writers) do lie very near upon the confines of jocularity, and are not eaſily differenced from thoſe ſallies of wit, wherein the lepid way doth conſiſt: ſo that were this wholly culpable, it would be matter of ſcruple, whether one hath committed a fault or no, when he meant only to play the orator, or the poet; and hard ſurely it would be to find a judge, who could preciſely ſet out the difference between a jeſt and a flouriſh.

8. I ſhall only add, that of old even the ſageſt and graveſt perſons (perſons of moſt rigid and ſevere virtue) did much affect this kind of diſcourſe, and did apply it to noble purpoſes. The great introducer of moral wiſdom among the Pagans did practiſe it ſo much, (by it repreſſing the windy pride and fallacious vanity of ſophiſters in his time,) that he thereby got the name of ὁ εἴρων, *the*

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droll: and the rest of those who pursued his design, do by numberless stories and apophthegms recorded of them appear well skilled, and much delighted in this way. Many great princes, (as Augustus Cæsar for one, many of whose jests are extant in Macrobius,) many grave statesmen, (as Cicero particularly, who composed several books of jests,) many famous captains, (as Fabius, M. Cato the Censor, Scipio Africanus, Epaminondas, Themistocles, Phocion, and many others, whose witty sayings together with their martial exploits are reported by historians,) have pleased themselves herein, and made it a condiment of their weighty businesses. [a] So that practising thus, within certain rule and compass, we cannot err without great patterns, and mighty patrons.

Cic. de Orat. ii.

9. In fine, since it cannot be shewn, that such a sportfulness of wit and fancy doth contain an intrinsic and inseparable turpitude; since it may be so cleanly, handsomely, and innocently used, as not to defile or discompose the mind of the speaker, not to wrong or harm the hearer, not to derogate from any worthy subject of discourse, not to infringe decency, to disturb peace, to violate any of the grand duties incumbent on us, (piety, charity, justice, sobriety,) but rather sometimes may yield advantage in those respects; it cannot well absolutely and universally be condemned: and when not used upon improper matter, in an unfit manner, with excessive measure, at undue season, to evil purpose, it may be allowed. It is bad objects, or bad adjuncts, which do spoil its indifference and innocence: it is the abuse thereof, to which (as all pleasant things are dangerous, and apt to degenerate into baits of intemperance and excess) it is very liable, that corrupteth it; and seemeth to be the ground, why in so general terms it is prohibited by the Apostle. Which prohibition to what cases, or what sorts of jesting it extendeth, we come now to declare.

Τὸ γελᾶν, ἢ ἀστεῖα λέγειν, οὐ δοκεῖ μὲν ὡμολογημένον ἁμάρτημα εἶναι, ἄγει δὲ, &c. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρεί.

Ὁ εὐτραπελευόμενος κατήγορος ἔσται ταχέως. *Chrys.*

[a] The two greatest men and gravest divines of their time, (S. Greg. Naz. and S. Basil.) could entertain one another with facetious epistles. (*Greg. Naz.* Ep. vii. ad *Basil.* Σὺ σκῶπτε καὶ διάσυρε, &c. Et Ep. viii.

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II. 1. All profane jeſting, all ſpeaking looſely and wantonly about holy things, (things nearly related to God and religion,) making ſuch things the matters of ſport and mockery, playing and trifling with them, is certainly prohibited, as an intolerably vain and wicked practice. It is an infallible ſign of a vain and light ſpirit, which conſidereth little, and cannot diſtinguiſh things, to talk lightly concerning perſons of high dignity, to whom eſpecial reſpect is due; or about matters of great importance, which deſerve very ſerious conſideration. No man ſpeaketh, or ſhould ſpeak, of his prince that which he hath not weighed, whether it will conſiſt with that veneration which ſhould be preſerved inviolate to him: and is not the ſame, is not much greater care to be uſed in regard to the incomparably great and glorious Majeſty of heaven? Yes, ſurely: as we ſhould not without great awe think of him; ſo we ſhould not preſume to mention his name, his word, his inſtitutions, any thing immediately belonging to him, without profoundeſt reverence and dread. It is the moſt enormous faucineſs that can be imagined, to ſpeak petulantly or pertly concerning him; eſpecially conſidering, that whatever we do ſay about him, we do utter it in his preſence, and to his very face. *For there is not,* as the holy Pſalmiſt conſidered, *a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether.* No man alſo hath the heart to droll, or thinks raillery convenient in caſes nearly touching his life, his health, his eſtate, or his fame: and are the true life and health of our ſoul, are intereſt in God's favour and mercy, are everlaſting glory and bliſs, affairs of leſs moment? Are the treaſures and joys of paradiſe, or the damages and torments in hell more jeſting matters? No certainly, no: in all reaſon therefore it becometh us, and it infinitely concerneth us, whenever we think of theſe things, to be in beſt earneſt, always to ſpeak of them in moſt ſober ſadneſs.

[a] Pſal. cxxxix. 4.

The proper objects of common mirth and ſportful divertiſement are mean and petty matters; any thing at leaſt is by playing therewith made ſuch: great things are

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thereby diminiſhed and debaſed; eſpecially ſacred things do grievouſly ſuffer thence, being with extreme indecency and indignity depreſſed beneath themſelves, when they become the ſubjects of flaſhy wit, or the entertainments of frothy merriment: to ſacrifice their honour to our vain pleaſure, being like the ridiculous fondneſs of that people, which, as Ælian reporteth, worſhipping a fly, did offer up an ox thereto. Theſe things were by God inſtituted, and propoſed to us for purpoſes quite different; to compoſe our hearts, and ſettle our fancies in a moſt ſerious frame; to breed inward ſatisfaction, and joy purely ſpiritual; to exerciſe our moſt ſolemn thoughts, and employ our graveſt diſcourſes: all our ſpeech therefore about them ſhould be *wholeſome*, apt to afford good inſtruction, or to excite good affections; *good*, as St. Paul ſpeaketh, *for the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers.*

Tit. ii. 8.

Eph. iv. 29.

If we muſt be facetious and merry, the field is wide and ſpacious; there are matters enough in the world beſide theſe moſt auguſt and dreadful things, to try our faculties, and pleaſe our humour with; every where light and ludicrous things occur: it therefore doth argue a marvellous poverty of wit, and barrenneſs of invention, no leſs than a ſtrange defect of goodneſs, and want of diſcretion, in thoſe who can deviſe no other ſubjects to frolic upon beſide theſe, of all moſt improper and perilous; who cannot ſeem ingenious under the charge of ſo highly treſpaſſing upon decency, diſclaiming wiſdom, wounding the ears of others, and their own conſciences. Seem ingenious, I ſay; for ſeldom thoſe perſons really are ſuch, or are capable to diſcover any wit in a wiſe and manly way. It is not the excellency of their fancies, which in themſelves uſually are ſorry and inſipid enough, but the uncouthneſs of their preſumption; not their extraordinary wit, but their prodigious raſhneſs, which is to be admired. They are gazed on, as the doers of bold tricks, who dare perform that which no ſober man will attempt: they do indeed rather deſerve themſelves to be laughed at, than their conceits. For what can be more

ridiculous than we do make ourſelves, when we thus fiddle and fool with our own ſouls; when, to make vain people merry, we incenſe God's earneſt diſpleaſure; when, to raiſe a fit of preſent laughter, we expoſe ourſelves to endleſs wailing and woe; when, to be reckoned wits, we prove ourſelves ſtark wild? Surely to this caſe we may accommodate that of a truly great wit, King Solomon; *I ſaid of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?* Eccleſ. ii. 2. SERM. XIV.

2. All injurious, abuſive, ſcurrilous jeſting, which cauſeleſsly or needleſsly tendeth to the diſgrace, damage, vexation, or prejudice in any kind of our neighbour, (provoking his diſpleaſure, grating on his modeſty, ſtirring paſſion in him,) is alſo prohibited. When men, to raiſe an admiration of their wit, to pleaſe themſelves, or gratify the humour of other men, do expoſe their neighbour to ſcorn and contempt, making ignominious reflections upon his perſon or his actions, taunting his real imperfections, or faſtening imaginary ones upon him, they tranſgreſs their duty, and abuſe their wits; it is not urbanity, or genuine facetiouſneſs, but uncivil rudeneſs, or vile malignity. To do thus, as it is the office of mean and baſe ſpirits, unfit for any worthy or weighty employments, ſo it is full of inhumanity, of iniquity, of indecency and folly. For the weakneſſes of men, of what kind ſoever, (natural or moral, in quality or in act,) conſidering whence they ſpring, and how much we are all ſubject to them, and do need excuſe for them, do in equity challenge compaſſion to be had of them; not complacency to be taken in them, or mirth drawn from them; they, in reſpect to common humanity, ſhould rather be ſtudiouſly connived at and concealed, or mildly excuſed, than wilfully laid open, and wantonly deſcanted upon; they rather are to be deplored ſecretly, than openly derided.

— ſolutos
Qui captat riſus hominum, famamque dicacis, Hieniger eſt. *Hor. Sat.* i. 4.

ὁ δὲ βωμολόχος ἥττων ἐστὶ τοῦ γελοίου, καὶ οὔτε ἑαυτοῦ οὔτε τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιχόμενος, εἰ γέλωτα ποιήσει. *Ariſt. Eth.* iv. 8.

The reputation of men is too noble a ſacrifice to be offered up to vain glory, fond pleaſure, or ill humour; it is a good far more dear and precious, than to be proſtituted for idle ſport and divertiſement. It becometh us not to trifle with that, which in common eſtimation is of

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Vitrea fama. *Hor.*

so great moment; to play rudely with a thing so very brittle, yet of so vast price; which being once broken or cracked, it is very hard, and scarce possible, to repair. A small transient pleasure, a tickling the ears, wagging the lungs, forming the face into a smile, a giggle, or a hum, are not to be purchased with the grievous distaste and smart, perhaps with the real damage and mischief of our neighbour, which attend upon contempt.[b] This is not jesting surely, but bad earnest: it is wild mirth, which is the mother of grief to those whom we should tenderly love; it is unnatural sport, which breedeth displeasure in them whose delight it should promote, whose liking it should procure: it crosseth the nature and design of this way of speaking; which is to cement and ingratiate society, to render conversation pleasant and sprightly, for mutual satisfaction and comfort.

Matt. v. 13. Nimium risus pretium est, si probitatis impendio constat. *Quint.*

True festivity is called *salt*; and such it should be, giving a smart, but savoury relish to discourse; exciting an appetite, not irritating disgust; cleansing sometime, but never creating a sore: and, ἐὰν μωρανθῇ, *if it become thus insipid*, or unsavoury, *it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.* Such jesting which doth not season wholesome or harmless discourse, but giveth a haut-gout to putid and poisonous stuff, gratifying distempered palates and corrupt stomachs, is indeed odious and despicable folly, *to be cast out* with loathing, *to be trodden under foot* with contempt. If a man offends in this sort to please himself, it is scurvy malignity; if to delight others, it is base servility and flattery: upon the first score he is a buffoon to himself; upon the last, a fool to others. And well in common speech are such practisers so termed, the grounds of that practice being so vain, and the effect so unhappy. *The heart of fools*, saith the Wise Man, *is in the house of mirth*; meaning, it seems, especially such hurtfully-wanton mirth:

Εἰ καλὸν τὸ πρᾶγμα, τί τοῖς μίμοις ἀφίεται; μίμος γίνῃ; καὶ οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ; *Chrys.*

Eccles. vii. 4.

[b] Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. As a mad man, who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?

Οἱ ἐνεδρεύοντες τοὺς φίλους.—LXX.

for it is, as he farther tells us, the property of fools to delight in doing harm: *It is a ſport to a fool to do miſchief.* [c] Is it not in earneſt moſt palpable folly for ſo mean ends to do ſo great harm; to diſoblige men in ſport; to loſe friends, and get enemies, for a conceit; out of a light humour to provoke fierce wrath, and breed tough hatred; to engage oneſelf conſequently very far in ſtrife, danger, and trouble? No way certainly is more apt to produce ſuch effects than this; nothing more ſpeedily enflameth, or more thoroughly engageth men, or ſticketh longer in men's hearts and memories, than bitter taunts and ſcoffs: whence this honey ſoon turns into gall; theſe jolly comedies do commonly terminate in woful tragedies. SERM. XIV. Prov. x. 23.

Eſpecially this ſcurrilous and ſcoffing way is then moſt deteſtable, when it not only expoſeth the blemiſhes and infirmities of men, but abuſeth piety and virtue themſelves; flouting perſons for their conſtancy in devotion, or their ſtrict adherence to a conſcientious practice of duty; aiming to effect that which Job complaineth of, *The juſt upright man is laughed to ſcorn*; reſembling thoſe whom the Pſalmiſt thus deſcribeth, *Who whet their tongue like a ſword, and bend their arrows, even bitter words, that they may ſhoot in ſecret at the perfect*; ſerving good men as Jeremy was ſerved, *The word of the Lord*, ſaith he, *was made a reproach unto me, and a deriſion daily.* Job xii. 4. Pſal. lxiv. 3, 4. Jer. xx. 8.

This practice doth evidently in the higheſt degree tend to the diſparagement and diſcouragement of goodneſs; aiming to expoſe it, and to render men aſhamed thereof; and it manifeſtly proceedeth from a deſperate corruption of mind, from a mind hardened and emboldened, ſold and enſlaved to wickedneſs: whence they who deal therein are in holy Scripture repreſented as egregious ſinners, or

[c] Fools make a mock of ſin. Prov. xiv. 9.

Potius amicum quam dictum perdidi.

——dummodo riſum

Excutiat ſibi, non hic cuiquam parcet amico. *Hor. Sat.* i. 4.

——dicax idem, et Tiberium acerbis facetiis irridere ſolitus, quarum apud præpotentes in longum memoria eſt. *Tac.* v. *Ann.* p. 184.

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persons superlatively wicked, under the name of *scorners*; (λοιμοὺς, *pests*, or pestilent men, the Greek translators call them, properly enough in regard to the effects of their practice;) concerning whom the Wise Man, signifying how God will meet with them in their own way, saith, *Surely the Lord scorneth the scorners.* Ἐμπαίκτας, *scoffers*, (or *mockers*,) St. Peter termeth them, *who walk according to their own lusts*; who not being willing to practise, are ready to deride virtue; thereby striving to seduce others into their pernicious courses.

Prov. iii. 34. 2 Pet. iii. 3.

This offence also proportionably groweth more criminal, as it presumeth to reach persons eminent in dignity or worth, unto whom special veneration is appropriate. This adjoineth saucineſs to scurrility, and advanceth the wrong thereof into a kind of sacrilege. It is not only injustice, but profaneness, to *abuse the gods*. Their station is a sanctuary from all irreverence and reproach; they are seated on high, that we may only look up to them with respect; their defects are not to be seen, or not to be touched by malicious or wanton wits, by spiteful or scornful tongues: the diminution of their credit is a public mischief, and the State itself doth suffer in their becoming objects of scorn; not only themselves are vilified and degraded, but the great affairs they manage are obstructed, the justice they administer is disparaged thereby.

Exod. xxii. 28.

In fine, no jesting is allowable, which is not throughly innocent: it is an unworthy perverting of wit, to employ it in biting and scratching; in working prejudice to any man's reputation or interest; in needlessly incensing any man's anger or sorrow; in raising animosities, dissensions, and feuds among any.

Whence it is somewhat strange, that any men from so mean and silly a practice should expect commendation, or that any should afford regard thereto; the which it is so far from meriting, that indeed contempt and abhorrence

d Πόῤῥω δὲ τοῦτο Χριστιανοῦ, τὸ κωμῳδεῖν. *Chrys. in Eph.* Or. 17.

Γλῶσσαν ἔχοις, οὐχ ἵνα ἕτερον κωμῳδήσῃς, ἀλλ' ἵνα εὐχαριστήσῃς τῷ Θεῷ. *Idem.*

are due to it. Men do truly more render themſelves SERM. XIV.
deſpicable than others, when, without juſt ground, or reaſonable occaſion, they do attack others in this way. That ſuch a practice doth ever find any encouragement or acceptance, whence can it proceed, but from the bad nature and ſmall judgment of ſome perſons? For to any man who is endued with any ſenſe of goodneſs, and hath a competence of true wit, or a right knowledge of good manners, (who knows—*inurbanum lepido ſeponere dicto,*) Hor. it cannot but be unſavoury and loathſome. The repute it obtaineth is in all reſpects unjuſt. So would it appear, not only were the cauſe to be decided in the court of morality, becauſe it conſiſts not with virtue and wiſdom; but even before any competent judges of wit itſelf. For he overthrows his own pretence, and cannot reaſonably claim any intereſt in wit, who doth thus behave himſelf: he prejudgeth himſelf to want wit, who cannot deſcry fit matter to divert himſelf or others: he diſcovereth a great ſtraitneſs and ſterility of good invention, who cannot in all the wide field of things find better ſubjects of diſcourſe; who knows not how to be ingenious within reaſonable compaſs, but to pick up a ſorry conceit is forced to make excurſions beyond the bounds of honeſty and decency.

Neither is it any argument of conſiderable ability in him that haps to pleaſe this way: a ſlender faculty will ſerve the turn. The ſharpneſs of his ſpeech cometh not from wit ſo much as from choler, which furniſheth the loweſt inventions with a kind of pungent expreſſion, and giveth an edge to every ſpiteful word[e]: ſo that any dull wretch doth ſeem to ſcold eloquently and ingeniouſly. Commonly alſo ſatirical taunts do owe their ſeeming piquancy, not to the ſpeaker or his words, but to the ſubject, and the hearers; the matter conſpiring with the bad nature or the vanity of men, who love to laugh at any rate, and to be pleaſed at the expence of other men's re-

[e] Obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur: quippe adulationi fœdum crimen ſervitutis, malignitati falſa ſpecies libertatis ineſt. *Tac. Hiſt.* i. *init.*

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pute; conceiting themſelves extolled by the depreſſion of their neighbour, and hoping to gain by his loſs. Such cuſtomers they are that maintain the bitter wits, who otherwiſe would want trade, and might go a-begging. For commonly they who ſeem to excel this way are miſerably flat in other diſcourſe, and moſt dully ſerious: they have a particular unaptneſs to deſcribe any good thing, or commend any worthy perſon; being deſtitute of right ideas, and proper terms anſwerable to ſuch purpoſes: their repreſentations of that kind are abſurd and unhandſome; their elogies (to uſe their own way of ſpeaking) are in effect ſatires, and they can hardly more abuſe a man than by attempting to commend him; like thoſe Jer. iv. 22. in the Prophet, who were *wiſe to do ill, but to do well had no knowledge.*

3. I paſs by, that it is very culpable to be facetious in obſcene and ſmutty matters. Such things are not to be diſcourſed on either in jeſt or in earneſt; they muſt not, Eph. v. 3. as St. Paul ſaith, be *ſo much as named among Chriſtians:* to meddle with them is not to diſport, but to defile oneſelf and others. There is indeed no more certain ſign of a mind utterly debauched from piety and virtue, than affecting ſuch talk. But farther,

4. All unſeaſonable jeſting is blameable. As there are ſome proper ſeaſons of relaxation, when we may *deſipere in loco;* ſo are there ſome times and circumſtances of things, wherein it concerneth and becometh men to be ſerious in mind, grave in demeanour, and plain in diſcourſe; when to ſport in this way is to do indecently, or uncivilly, to be impertinent, or troubleſome[f].

It comporteth not well with the preſence of ſuperiors, before whom it becometh us to be compoſed and modeſt: much leſs with the performance of ſacred offices, which require an earneſt attention, and moſt ſerious frame of mind.

In deliberations and debates about affairs of great im-

[f] Vitandum ne petulans, ne ſuperbum, ne loco, ne tempori alienum, ne præparatum et domo allatum videatur. *Quint.*

portance, the ſimple manner of ſpeaking to the point is the proper, eaſy, clear, and compendious way: facetious ſpeech there ſerves only to obſtruct and entangle buſineſs, to loſe time, and protract the reſult[g]. The ſhop and exchange will ſcarce endure jeſting in their lower tranſactions: the ſenate, the court of juſtice, the church do much more exclude it from their more weighty conſultations. Whenever it juſtleth out, or hindereth the diſpatch of other ſerious buſineſs, taking up the room or ſwallowing the time due to it, or indiſpoſing the minds of the audience to attend it, then it is unſeaſonable and peſtilent. Παίζειν, ἵνα σπουδάζῃς, *to play, that we may be ſeriouſly buſy*, is the good rule of Anacharſis, implying the ſubordination of ſport to buſineſs, as a condiment and furtherance, not an impediment or clog thereto. He that for his ſport neglects his buſineſs, deſerves indeed to be reckoned among children; and children's fortune will attend him, to be pleaſed with toys, and to fail of ſubſtantial profit. SERM. XIV. Ariſt. Eth. x. 6.

It is, again, improper (becauſe indeed uncivil and inhuman) to jeſt with perſons that are in a ſad or afflicted condition[h]; as arguing want of due conſidering or due commiſerating their caſe: it appears a kind of inſulting upon their misfortune, and is apt to foment their grief. Even in our own caſe, upon any diſaſtrous occurrence to ourſelves, it would not be ſeemly to frolic it thus; it would ſignify want of due regard to the frowns of God, and the ſtrokes of his hand; it would croſs the Wiſe Man's advice, *In the day of proſperity be joyful, but in the day of adverſity conſider.* Eccleſ. vii. 14.

It is alſo not ſeaſonable, or civil, to be jocund in this way with thoſe who deſire to be ſerious, and like not the humour. Jocularity ſhould not be forcibly obtruded, but by a kindly conſpiracy, or tacit compact, ſlip into converſation: conſent and complaiſance give all the life thereto. Its deſign is to ſweeten and eaſe ſociety; when to the

[g] Μή μοι τὰ κόμψ', ἀλλ' ὃν πόλιν δεῖ. *Eurip. Ariſt. Pol.* ii. 4.

[h] Adverſus miſeros inhumanus eſt jocus. *Quint.*

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contrary it breedeth offence or incumbrance, it is worſe than vain and unprofitable. From theſe inſtances we may collect when in other like caſes it is unſeaſonable, and therefore culpable. Farther,

5. To affect, admire, or highly to value this way of ſpeaking, either abſolutely in itſelf, or in compariſon to the ſerious and plain way of ſpeech, and thence to be drawn into an immoderate uſe thereof, is blameable. A man of ripe age, and ſound judgment, for refreſhment to himſelf, or in complaiſance to others, may ſometimes condeſcend to play in this or in any other harmleſs way: but to be fond of it, to proſecute it with a careful or painful eagerneſs, to doat and dwell upon it, to reckon it a brave or a fine thing, a ſingular matter of commendation, a tranſcendent accompliſhment, anywiſe preferable to rational endowments, or comparable to the moral excellencies of our mind, (to ſolid knowledge, or ſound wiſdom, or true virtue and goodneſs,) this is extremely childiſh, or brutiſh, and far below a man. What can be more abſurd, than to make a buſineſs of play, to be ſtudious and laborious in toys, to make a profeſſion or drive a trade of impertinency? [i] what more plain nonſenſe can there be, than to be earneſt in jeſt, to be continual in divertiſement, or conſtant in paſtime; to make extravagance all our way, and ſauce all our diet? Is not this plainly the life of a child, that is ever buſy, yet never hath any thing to do? or the life of that mimical brute, which is always active in playing uncouth and unlucky tricks; which, could it ſpeak, might ſurely paſs well for a profeſſed wit?

The proper work of man, the grand drift of human life, is to follow reaſon, (that noble ſpark kindled in us from heaven; that princely and powerful faculty, which is able to reach ſo lofty objects, and to achieve ſo mighty works;) not to ſooth fancy, that brutiſh, ſhallow, and giddy power, able to perform nothing worthy much regard.

[i] Σπουδάζειν καὶ παίζειν παιδιᾶς χάριν, ἀλόγως φαίνεται, καὶ λίαν παιδικῶς. *Arist. Eth.* x. 6.

We are not, even Cicero could tell us, *born for play and jeſting; but for ſeverity, and the ſtudy of graver and greater affairs*[k]. Yes, we were purpoſely deſigned, and fitly framed, to underſtand and contemplate, to affect and delight in, to undertake and purſue moſt noble and worthy things; to be employed in buſineſs conſiderably profitable to ourſelves, and beneficial to others: we do therefore ſtrangely debaſe ourſelves, when we do ſtrongly bend our minds to, or ſet our affections upon ſuch toys. SERM. XIV.

Eſpecially to do ſo is unworthy of a Chriſtian; that is of a perſon who is advanced to ſo high a rank, and ſo glorious relations; who hath ſo excellent objects of his mind and affections preſented before him, and ſo excellent rewards for his care and pains propoſed to him; who is engaged in affairs of ſo worthy nature, and ſo immenſe conſequence: for him to be zealous about quibbles, for him to be raviſhed with puny conceits and expreſſions, it is a wondrous overſight, and an enormous indecency.

He indeed that prefers any faculty to reaſon, diſclaims the privilege of being a man, and underſtands not the worth of his own nature; he that prizes any quality beyond virtue and goodneſs, renounces the title of a Chriſtian, and knows not how to value the dignity of his profeſſion. It is theſe two, reaſon and virtue, in conjunction, which produce all that is conſiderably good and great in the world. Fancy can do little; doeth never any thing well, except as directed and wielded by them. Do pretty conceits or humorous talk carry on any buſineſs, or perform any work? No; they are ineffectual and fruitleſs: often they diſturb, but they never diſpatch any thing with good ſucceſs. It is ſimple reaſon, as dull and dry as it ſeemeth, which expediteth all the grand affairs, which accompliſheth all the mighty works that we ſee done in the world. In truth, therefore, as one diamond is worth numberleſs bits of glaſs; ſo one ſolid reaſon is worth innumerable fancies: one grain of true ſcience and ſound

[k] Neque enim ita generati a natura ſumus, ut ad ludum jocumque facti videamur; ſed ad ſeveritatem potius, et ad quædam ſtudia graviora atque majora. *Cic. Off.* i.

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wiſdom in real worth and uſe doth outweigh loads, if any loads can be, of freakiſh wit. To rate things otherwiſe doth argue great weakneſs of judgment, and fondneſs of mind. So to conceit of this way ſignifieth a weak mind; and much to delight therein rendereth it ſo: nothing more debaſeth the ſpirit of a man, or more rendereth it light and trifling[1].

Hence if we muſt be venting pleaſant conceits, we ſhould do it *as if we did it not*, careleſsly and unconcernedly; not ſtanding upon it, or valuing ourſelves for it: we ſhould do it with meaſure and moderation; not giving up ourſelves thereto, ſo as to mind it, or delight in it more than in any other thing: we ſhould not be ſo intent upon it as to become remiſs in affairs more proper or needful for us; ſo as to nauſeate ſerious buſineſs, or diſreliſh the more worthy entertainments of our minds. This is the great danger of it, which we daily ſee men to incur; they are ſo bewitched with a humour of being witty themſelves, or of hearkening to the fancies of others, that it is this only which they can like or favour, which they can endure to think or talk of. It is a great pity, that men who would ſeem to have ſo much wit, ſhould ſo little underſtand themſelves. But farther,

6. Vain-glorious oſtentation this way is very blameable. All ambition, all vanity, all conceitedneſs, upon whatever ground they are founded, are abſolutely unreaſonable and filly: but yet thoſe, being grounded on ſome real ability, or ſome uſeful ſkill, are wiſe and manly in compariſon to this, which ſtandeth on a foundation ſo manifeſtly ſlight and weak. The old philoſophers by a ſevere father were called *animalia gloriæ, animals of glory;* and by a ſati-

Tertul.

[1] Ὡς μὴ συμβαίνειν κατὰ ταυτὴν ψυχῆς νῆψιν, καὶ εὐτραπελίας διάχυσιν. *Baſ. Conſt. Mon.* 12.

Πολλοὺς συμβαίνει τοὺς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐσχολυμένους, τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου διαμαρτάνειν, τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς γιλοῖα μὲν διαχυομένης, καὶ τὸ τῆς φρονήσεως σθένος ὑπὸ πνευματίνου καταλυόσης. *Ibid.*

Jocorum frequens uſus omne animis pondus, omnemque vim eripiet. *Sen. de Trang.* c. xv.

Ἡ εὐτραπελία μαλακὴν ποιεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν, ῥᾳθυμὸν, ἀνασκευωρίαν. *Chryſ. in Eph.* 17.

rical poet they were termed *bladders of vanity*: but they at leaſt did catch at praiſe from praiſeworthy knowledge; they were puffed up with a wind which blowed ſome good to mankind; they ſought glory from that which deſerved glory, if they had not ſought it; it was a ſubſtantial and ſolid credit which they did affect, reſulting from ſucceſsful enterpriſes of ſtrong reaſon and ſtout induſtry: but theſe *animalcula gloriæ*, theſe flies, theſe inſects of glory, theſe, not bladders, but bubbles of vanity, would be admired and praiſed for that which is nowiſe admirable or laudable; for the caſual hits and emergencies of roving fancy; for ſtumbling on an odd conceit or phraſe, which ſignifieth nothing, and is as ſuperficial as the ſmile, as hollow as the noiſe it cauſeth. Nothing certainly in nature is more ridiculous than a ſelf-conceited wit, who deemeth himſelf ſomebody, and greatly pretendeth to commendation from ſo pitiful and worthleſs a thing as a knack of trifling.

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Κενῆς οἰήσεως ἱμεῖλιοι δεσποί. *Timon.*

Riſus—tenuiſſimus ingenii fructus. *Cic. de Orat.* ii.

7. Laſtly, it is our duty never ſo far to engage ourſelves in this way, as thereby to loſe or to impair that habitual ſerioufneſs, modeſty, and ſobriety of mind, that ſteady compoſedneſs, gravity and conſtancy of demeanour, which become Chriſtians. We ſhould continually keep our minds intent upon our *high calling*, and grand intereſts; ever well tuned, and ready for the performance of holy devotions, and the practice of moſt ſerious duties with earneſt attention and fervent affection: wherefore we ſhould never ſuffer them to be diſſolved into levity, or diſordered into a wanton frame, indiſpoſing us for religious thoughts and actions. We ought always in our behaviour to maintain not only τὸ πρέπον, a fitting *decency*, but alſo τὸ σεμνὸν, a ſtately *gravity*, a kind of venerable majeſty, ſuitable to that high rank which we bear of God's friends and children; adorning our holy profeſſion, and guarding us from all impreſſions of ſinful vanity. Wherefore we ſhould not let ourſelves be tranſported into any exceſſive pitch of lightneſs, inconſiſtent with, or prejudicial to, our Chriſtian ſtate and buſineſs. Gravity and modeſty are the fences of piety, which being once ſlighted,

Phil. iv. 8. 1 Tim. iii. 8. Tit. ii. 10.

Dictum potius aliquando perdet, quam minuet autoritatem. *Quint.* vi. 3.

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ſin will eaſily attempt and encroach upon us. So the old Spaniſh gentleman may be interpreted to have been wiſe, who, when his ſon upon a voyage to the Indies took his leave of him, gave him this odd advice; *My ſon, in the firſt place keep thy gravity, in the next place fear God:* intimating, that a man muſt firſt be ſerious before he can be pious.

Strad. Infam. Famiani.

To conclude, as we need not be demure, ſo muſt we not be impudent; as we ſhould not be ſour, ſo ought we not to be fond; as we may be free, ſo we ſhould not be vain; as we may well ſtoop to friendly complaiſance, ſo we ſhould take heed of falling into contemptible levity. If without wronging others, or derogating from ourſelves, we can be facetious; if we can uſe our wits in jeſting innocently and conveniently; we may ſometimes do it: but let us, in compliance with St. Paul's direction, beware of *fooliſh talking and jeſting, which are not convenient.*

Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

Now the God of grace and *peace make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

SERMON XV.

AGAINST RASH AND VAIN SWEARING.

JAMES v. 12.

But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not.

AMONG other precepts of good life (directing the practice of virtue and abſtinence from ſin) St. James doth inſert this about ſwearing, couched in expreſſion denoting his great earneſtneſs, and apt to excite our ſpecial attention. Therein he doth not mean univerſally to interdict the uſe of oaths; (for that in ſome caſes is not only lawful, but very expedient, yea needful, and required from us as a duty;) but that ſwearing which our Lord had expreſsly prohibited to his diſciples, and which thence, queſtionleſs, the *brethren* to whom St. James did write did well underſtand themſelves obliged to forbear, having learnt ſo in the firſt catechiſms of Chriſtian inſtitution; that is, needleſs and heedleſs ſwearing in ordinary converſation: a practice then frequented in the world, both among Jews and Gentiles; the which alſo, to the ſhame of our age, is now ſo much in faſhion, and with ſome men in vogue; the invoking God's name, appealing to his teſtimony, and provoking his judgment, upon any ſlight occaſion, in common talk, with vain incogitancy, or profane boldneſs. From ſuch practice the holy Apoſtle dehorteth in terms importing his great concernedneſs, and implying the matter to be of higheſt importance:

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for, Πρὸ πάντων, saith he, *Before all things, my brethren, do not swear;* as if he did apprehend this sin of all other to be one of the most heinous and pernicious. Could he have said more? would he have said so much, if he had not conceived the matter to be of exceeding weight and consequence? And that it is so, I mean now, by God's help, to shew you, by proposing some considerations, whereby the heinous wickedness, together with the monstrous folly, of such rash and vain swearing will appear; the which being laid to heart will, I hope, effectually dissuade and deter from it.

I. Let us consider the nature of an oath, and what we do when we adventure to swear.

It is (as it is phrased in the Decalogue, and otherwhere in holy Scripture) an *assuming the name of our God,* and applying it to our purpose, to countenance and confirm what we say[a].

Exod. xx. 7. Prov. xxx. 9.

It is an invocation of God as a most faithful witness, concerning the truth of our words, or the sincerity of our meaning.

Gen. xxxi. 50. Judg. xi. 10. 1 Sam. xii. 5.

It is an appeal to God as a most upright Judge, whether we do prevaricate in asserting what we do not believe true, or in promising what we are not firmly resolved to perform.

Jer. xlii. 5. Job xvi. 19. Mal. iii. 5. 1 Joh. v. 9.

It is a formal engagement of God to be the Avenger of our trespassing in violation of truth or faith.

Gen. xxxi. 53. 1 Sam. xxiv. 15.

It is a *binding our souls*[b] with a most strict and solemn obligation, to answer before God, and to undergo the issue of his judgment about what we affirm or undertake.

1 Kings viii. 31, 32. ii. 23. xix. 2. xx. 10. Neh. v. 12, 13.

Such an oath is represented to us in holy Scripture.

Ruth i. 17. 2 Kings vi. 31.

Whence we may collect, that swearing doth require great modesty and composedness of spirit, very serious consideration and solicitous care, that we be not rude and saucy with God, *in taking up his name,* and prostituting

2 Sam. iii. 9. 35. xix. 13. 1 Sam. xiv. 44. iii. 17. xx. 13.

[a] Plurima firmantur jurejurando——diis immortalibus interpositis tum judicibus, tum testibus. *Cic. de Leg.* ii. p. 326.

[b] Num. xxx. 2. Πᾶς ὅρκος εἰς κατάραν τελευτᾷ τῆς ἐπιορκίας. *Plut. in Capit. Rom.* p. 491.

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it to vile or mean uſes; that we do not abuſe or debaſe his authority, by citing it to aver falſehoods or impertinences; that we do not ſlight his venerable juſtice, by raſhly provoking it againſt us; that we do not precipitantly throw our ſouls into moſt dangerous ſnares and intricacies.

For, let us reflect and conſider: what a preſumption is it without due regard and reverence to lay hold on God's name; with unhallowed breath to vent and toſs that *great* and *glorious*, that moſt *holy*, that *reverend*, that *fearful* and *terrible name* of the Lord our God, the great Creator, the mighty Sovereign, the dreadful Judge of all the world; that name which all heaven with profoundeſt ſubmiſſion doth adore, which the angelical powers, the brighteſt and pureſt ſeraphim, without *hiding their faces*, and reverential horror, cannot utter or hear; the very thought whereof ſhould ſtrike awe through our hearts, the mention whereof would make any ſober man to tremble; Πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπον, *For how*, ſaith St. Chryſoſtom, *is it not abſurd, that a ſervant ſhould not dare to call his maſter by name, or bluntly and ordinarily to mention him; yet that we ſlightly and contemptuouſly ſhould in our mouth toſs about the Lord of angels?*

Pſal. xcix. 3. cxi. 9. cxlviii. 13. Deut. xxviii. 58. Iſa. vi. 2. Chryſ. Ἀνδρ. ζ. Id. Ἀνδρ. ζ. p. 514.

How is it not abſurd, if we have a garment better than the reſt, that we forbear to uſe it continually; but in the moſt ſlight and common way do wear the name of God? Id. Ἀνδρ. ϛ'. p. 525.

How grievous indecency is it, at every turn to ſummon our Maker, and call down Almighty God from heaven, to attend our leiſure, to vouch our idle prattle, to ſecond our giddy paſſions, to concern his truth, his juſtice, his power in our trivial affairs?

What a wildneſs is it, to dally with that judgment upon which the eternal doom of all creatures dependeth, at which *the pillars of heaven are aſtoniſhed*, which hurled down legions of angels from the top of heaven and happineſs into the bottomleſs dungeon; the which, as grievous ſinners, of all things we have moſt reaſon to dread; and about which no ſober man can otherwiſe think, than did that great king, the holy Pſalmiſt, who ſaid,

Job xxvi. 11.

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Pſal. cxix. 120.

How prodigious a madneſs is it, without any conſtraint or needful cauſe to incur ſo horrible danger, to ruſh upon a curſe; to defy that vengeance, the leaſt touch or breath whereof can daſh us to nothing, or thruſt us down into extreme and endleſs woe?

Who can expreſs the wretchedneſs of that folly, which ſo entangleth us with inextricable knots, and enchaineth our ſouls ſo raſhly with deſperate obligations?

Wherefore he that would but a little mind what he doeth when he dareth to ſwear, what it is to meddle with the adorable name, the venerable teſtimony, the formidable judgment, the terrible vengeance of the Divine Majeſty, into what a caſe he putteth himſelf, how extreme hazard he runneth thereby, would aſſuredly have little heart to ſwear, without greateſt reaſon, and moſt urgent need; hardly without trembling would he undertake the moſt neceſſary and ſolemn oath; much cauſe would he ſee σέβεσθαι ὅρκον, *to adore*, to fear an oath: which to do the divine Preacher maketh the character of a good man;

Eccleſ. ix. 2. *As*, ſaith he, *is the good, ſo is the ſinner, and he that ſweareth, as he that feareth an oath.*

In fine, even a heathen Philoſopher, conſidering the nature of an oath, did conclude the unlawfulneſs thereof in ſuch caſes. For, *Seeing*, ſaith he, *an oath doth call God for witneſs, and propoſeth him for umpire and voucher of the things it ſaith; therefore to induce God ſo upon occaſion of human affairs, or, which is all one, upon ſmall and ſlight accounts, doth imply contempt of him: wherefore we ought wholly to ſhun ſwearing, except upon occaſions of higheſt neceſſity* [c].

II. We may conſider, that ſwearing (agreeably to its nature, or natural aptitude and tendency) is repreſented in holy Scripture as a ſpecial part of religious worſhip, or

[c] Ὁ γὰρ ὅρκος μάρτυρα τὸν Θεὸν καλεῖ, καὶ μετίσταν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐγγυητὴν ἐφ' οἷς λέγει παρέσχεται. τὸ γοῦν ἕνεκα ἀνθρωπίνων πράγματος (ταυτὸν δὲ εἰπεῖν μικροῖς καὶ εὐτελέσι) τὸν Θεὸν παράγειν, καταφρόνησίν τινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐνεργάζεται· διὸ χρὴ παραιτεῖσθαι τὸν ὅρκον, &c. *Simpl. in Epict.* cap. xliv.

devotion toward God; in the due performance whereof we do avow him for the true God and Governor of the world; we piouſly do acknowledge his principal attributes and ſpecial prerogatives; (his omnipreſence and omniſcience, extending itſelf to our moſt inward thoughts, our ſecreteſt purpoſes, our cloſeſt retirements; his watchful providence over all our actions, affairs, and concerns; his faithful goodneſs, in favouring truth and protecting right; his exact juſtice, in patronizing ſincerity, and chaſtizing perfidiouſneſs;) his being ſupreme Lord over all perſons, and Judge paramount in all cauſes; his readineſs in our need, upon our humble imploration and reference, to undertake the arbitration of matters controverted, and the care of adminiſtering juſtice, for the maintenance of truth and right, of loyalty and fidelity, of order and peace among men. Swearing doth alſo intimate a pious truſt and confidence in God; as Ariſtotle obſerveth [d].

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Such things a ſerious oath doth imply, to ſuch purpoſes ſwearing naturally ſerveth; and therefore to ſignify or effectuate them, divine inſtitution hath devoted it.

God in goodneſs to ſuch ends hath pleaſed to lend us his great name; allowing us to cite him for a witneſs, to have recourſe to his bar, to engage his juſtice and power, whenever the caſe deſerveth and requireth it, or when we cannot by other means well aſſure the ſincerity of our meaning, or ſecure the conſtancy of our reſolutions.

Yea in ſuch exigences he doth exact this practice from us, as an inſtance of our religious confidence in him, and as a ſervice conducible to his glory: for it is a precept in his law, of moral nature, and eternal obligation, *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God; him ſhalt thou ſerve, and to him ſhalt thou cleave, and ſhalt ſwear by his name.* It is the character of a religious man to ſwear with due reverence and upright conſcience. For, *The king,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſhall rejoice in God; every one that ſweareth by*

Deut. x. 20. vi. 13.

Pſ. lxiii. 11.

[d] Εὐσεβές τὸ θέλειν τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπιτρέπειν. It is a pious thing willingly to commend our caſe or controverſy to God. *Ariſt. Rhet.* i. 48.

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him ſhall glory: but the mouth of them that ſpeak lies ſhall be ſtopped. It is a diſtinctive mark of God's people, according to that of the Prophet Jeremy, *And it ſhall come to paſs, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to ſwear by my name——then ſhall they be built in the midſt of my people.* It is predicted concerning the evangelical times, *Unto me every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear:* and, *That he who bleſſeth himſelf in the earth, ſhall bleſs himſelf by the God of truth; and he that ſweareth in the earth, ſhall ſwear by the God of truth.*

Jer. xii. 16.

Iſa. xlv. 23. lxv. 16.

As therefore all other acts of devotion, wherein immediate application is made to the Divine Majeſty, ſhould never be performed without moſt hearty intention, moſt ſerious conſideration, moſt lowly reverence; ſo neither ſhould this grand one, wherein God is ſo nearly touched, and his chief attributes ſo much concerned: the which indeed doth involve both prayer and praiſe, doth require the moſt devotional acts of faith and fear.

We therefore ſhould ſo perform it as not to incur that reproof; *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

Matt. xv. 8. Iſa. xxix. 13.

When we ſeem moſt formally to avow God, to confeſs his omniſcience, to confide in his juſtice; we ſhould not really diſregard him, and in effect ſignify, that we do not think he doth know what we ſay, or mind what we do.

If we do preſume to offer this ſervice, we ſhould do it in the manner appointed by himſelf, according to the conditions preſcribed in the Prophet, *Thou ſhalt ſwear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteouſneſs: in truth,* taking heed that our meaning be conformable to the ſenſe of our words, and our words to the verity of things; *in judgment,* having with careful deliberation examined and weighed that which we aſſert or promiſe; *in righteouſneſs,* being ſatisfied in conſcience, that we do not therein infringe any rule of piety toward God, of equity toward men, of ſobriety and diſcretion in regard to ourſelves.

Jer. iv. 2.

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The cauſe of our ſwearing muſt be needful, or very expedient; the deſign of it muſt be honeſt and uſeful to conſiderable purpoſes; (tending to God's honour, our neighbour's benefit, our own welfare;) the matter of it ſhould be not only juſt and lawful, but worthy and weighty; the manner ought to be grave and ſolemn, our mind being framed to earneſt attention, and endued with pious affections ſuitable to the occaſion.

Otherwiſe, if we do venture to ſwear, without due advice and care, without much reſpect and awe, upon any ſlight or vain (not to ſay bad or unlawful) occaſion; we then defecrate ſwearing, and are guilty of profaning a moſt ſacred ordinance: the doing ſo doth imply baſe hypocriſy, or lewd mockery, or abominable wantonneſs and folly; in boldly invading, and vainly trifling with the moſt auguſt duties of religion. Such ſwearing therefore is very diſhonourable and injurious to God, very prejudicial to religion, very repugnant to piety. Matt. xv. 7, 8.

III. We may conſider that the ſwearing prohibited is very noxious to human ſociety.

The great prop of ſociety (which upholdeth the ſafety, peace, and welfare thereof, in obſerving laws, diſpenſing juſtice, diſcharging truſts, keeping contracts, and holding good correſpondence mutually) is conſcience, or a ſenſe of duty toward God, obliging to perform what is right and equal; quickened by hope of rewards, and fear of puniſhments from him: ſecluding which principle, no worldly conſideration is ſtrong enough to hold men faſt; or can farther diſpoſe many to do right, or obſerve faith, or hold peace, than appetite, or intereſt, or humour (things very ſlippery and uncertain) do ſway them.

That men ſhould live honeſtly, quietly, and comfortably together, it is needful that they ſhould live under a ſenſe of God's will, and in awe of the divine power, hoping to pleaſe God, and fearing to offend him, by their behaviour reſpectively.

That juſtice ſhould be adminiſtered between men, it is neceſſary that teſtimonies of fact be alleged; and that witneſſes ſhould apprehend themſelves greatly obliged to

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diſcover the truth, according to their conſcience, in dark and doubtful caſes.

That men ſhould uprightly diſcharge offices ſerviceable to public good, it doth behove that they be firmly engaged to perform the truſts repoſed in them.

That in affairs of very conſiderable importance, men ſhould deal with one another with ſatisfaction of mind and mutual confidence, they muſt receive competent aſſurances concerning the integrity, fidelity, and conſtancy each of other.

That the ſafety of governors may be preſerved, and the obedience due to them maintained ſecure from attempts to which they are liable, (by the treachery, levity, perverſeneſs, timorouſneſs, ambition, all ſuch luſts and ill humours of men,) it is expedient that men ſhould be tied with the ſtricteſt bands of allegiance.

That controverſies emergent about the intereſts of men ſhould be determined, and an end put to ſtrife by peremptory and ſatisfactory means, is plainly neceſſary for common quiet.

Wherefore for the public intereſt and benefit of human ſociety, it is requiſite that the higheſt obligations poſſible ſhould be laid upon the conſciences of men.

And ſuch are thoſe of oaths, engaging them to fidelity and conſtancy in all ſuch caſes, out of regard to Almighty God, as the infallible Patron of truth and right, the unavoidable Chaſtiſer of perfidiouſneſs and improbity.

To ſuch purpoſes therefore oaths have ever been applied, as the moſt effectual inſtruments of working them; not only among the followers of true and perfect religion, but even among all thoſe who had any glimmering notions concerning a Divine power and providence; who have deemed an oath the faſteſt tie of conſcience, and held the violation of it for the moſt deteſtable impiety and iniquity. So that what Cicero ſaith of the Romans, that [e] *their anceſtors had no band to conſtrain faith more*

[e] Nullum enim vinculum ad adſtringendam fidem jurejurando majores arctius eſſe voluerunt. *Cic. de Off.* iii.

ſtrait than an oath, is true of all other nations; common reaſon not being able to deviſe any engagement more obliging than it; it being in the nature of things τελευταία πίστις, and ὀχυρώτατον ἀληθείας ἐνέχυρον, the utmoſt aſſurance, the laſt reſort of human faith, the ſureſt pledge that any man can yield of his truſtineſs. Hence ever in tranſactions of higheſt moment this hath been uſed to bind the faith of men. SERM. XV. Dion. Halic. Procop. Diod. Sic.

Hereby nations have been wont to ratify leagues of peace and amity between each other: (which therefore the Greeks called ὅρκια.) Περὶ τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ φιλίας. *Polyb.*

Hereby princes have obliged their ſubjects to loyalty: and it hath ever been the ſtrongeſt argument to preſs that duty, which the Preacher uſeth; *I counſel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.* Eccleſ. viii. 2.

Hereby generals have engaged their ſoldiers to ſtick cloſe to them, in bearing hardſhips and encountering dangers. Veget. ii.

Hereby the nuptial league hath been confirmed; the ſolemnization whereof in temples before God is in effect a moſt ſacred oath.

Hereon the deciſion of the greateſt cauſes concerning the lives, eſtates, and reputations of men have depended; ſo that, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife.* Heb. vi. 16.

Indeed ſuch hath the need hereof been ever apprehended, that we may obſerve, in caſes of great importance, no other obligation hath been admitted for ſufficient to bind the fidelity and conſtancy of the moſt credible perſons; ſo that even the beſt men hardly could truſt the beſt men without it. For inſtance,

When Abimelech would aſſure to himſelf the friendſhip of Abraham, although he knew him to be a very pious and righteous perſon, whoſe word might be as well taken as any man's, yet, for entire ſatisfaction, he thus ſpake to him; *God is with thee in all that thou doeſt: now therefore ſwear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falſely with me.* Gen. xxi. 22, 23.

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Abraham, though he did much confide in the honeſty of his ſervant Eliezer, having entruſted him with all his eſtate, yet in the affair concerning the marriage of his ſon, he could not but thus oblige him: *Put,* ſaith he, *I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee ſwear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou wilt not take a wife unto my ſon of the daughters of the Canaanites.*

Gen. xv. 3. xxiv. 2. xxiv. 2, 3.

Laban had good experience of Jacob's fidelity; yet that would not ſatisfy, but, *The Lord,* ſaid he, *watch between me and thee, when we are abſent one from another. If thou ſhalt afflict my daughters, or if thou ſhalt take other wives beſide my daughters, no man is with us; ſee, God is witneſs between thee and me. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us.*

Gen. xxxi. 49, 50, 53.

So did *Jacob make Joſeph ſwear,* that he would *bury him in Canaan:* and *Joſeph cauſed the children of Iſrael to ſwear,* that they would *tranſlate his bones.* So did *Jonathan cauſe* his beloved friend *David to ſwear,* that he would *ſhew kindneſs to him, and to his houſe for ever.* The prudence of which courſe the event ſheweth, the total exciſion of Jonathan's family being thereby prevented; for, *The King,* it is ſaid, *ſpared Mephibоſheth the ſon of Jonathan, becauſe of the Lord's oath that was between them.*

Gen. l. 5. l. 25. 1 Sam. xx. 14, 15, 17. 2 Sam. xxi. 7.

These inſtances declare, that there is no ſecurity which men can yield comparable to that of an oath; the obligation whereof no man wilfully can infringe, without renouncing the fear of God, and any pretence to his favour.

(1 Kings i. 51. Ezr. x. 5. Neh. v. 12. xiii. 25.)

Wherefore human ſociety will be extremely wronged and damnified by the diſſolving or ſlackening theſe moſt ſacred bands of conſcience: and conſequently by their common and careleſs uſe; which ſoon will breed a contempt of them, and render them inſignificant, either to bind the ſwearers, or to ground a truſt on their oaths.

As by the rare and reverent uſe of oaths their dignity is upheld, and their obligation kept faſt: ſo by the fre-

quent and negligent application of them, by the proſtituting them to every mean and toyiſh purpoſe, their reſpect will be quite loſt, their ſtrength will be looſed, they will prove unſerviceable to public uſe. SERM. XV.

If oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance ſignify? If men are wont to play with ſwearing anywhere, can we expect they ſhould be ſerious and ſtrict therein at the bar, or in the church? Will they regard God's teſtimony, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at one time, when every where upon any, upon no occaſion they dare to confront and contemn them? Who then will be the more truſted for ſwearing? What ſatisfaction will any man have from it? The rifeneſs of this practice, as it is the ſign, ſo it will be the cauſe of a general diffidence among men.

Incredible therefore is the miſchief which this vain practice will bring in to the public; depriving princes of their beſt ſecurity, expoſing the eſtates of private men to uncertainty, ſhaking all the confidence men can have in the faith of one another.

For which detriments accruing from this abuſe to the public, every vain ſwearer is reſponſible; and he would do well to conſider, that he will never be able to make reparation for them. And the public is much concerned that this enormity be retrenched.

IV. Let us conſider, that raſh and vain ſwearing is very apt often to bring the practiſer of it into that moſt horrible ſin of perjury. For [f]*falſe ſwearing*, as the Hebrew Wiſe Man ſaith, *naturally ſpringeth out of much ſwearing*: and, [g] *He*, ſaith St. Chryſoſtom, *that ſweareth*

[f] Φύεται ἐκ πολυορκίας ψευδορκία. *Philo in Decal.* Ne quiſquam facili juratione etiam ad perjurium decidiſſet, et in Eccleſia populo prædicabat, et ſuos inſtituerat, ne quis juraret nec ad modicum quidem. *Poſid. in Vit. S. Aug.* cap. xxv.

[g] Ὁ διηνεκῶς ὀμνὺς, &c. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. ιδ'. p. 553.

Μὴ εἰς ὑπόνοιαν πίπτητε, quidam legunt, Jac. v. 12. Vid. Grot.

Οὕτως ἐστὶν ἀμολόγημένον καὶ δῆλον, ὅτι τὸν πολύορκον ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐπίορκον εἶναι. Ibid.

Ἀμήχανον γὰρ, ἀμήχανον, στόμα μεμιλιτημὸς ὀμνύναι, μὴ συνεχῶς ἐπιορκεῖν. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. ιδ'. p. 559.

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continually, both willingly and unwillingly, both ignorantly and knowingly, both in earneſt and in ſport, being often tranſported by anger and many other things, will frequently forſwear. It is confeſſed and manifeſt, that it is neceſſary for him that ſweareth much, to be perjurious. Ἀμήχανον γὰρ, ἀμήχανον, *For,* ſaith he again, *it is impoſſible, it is impoſſible for a mouth addicted to ſwearing, not frequently to forſwear.* He that ſweareth at random, as blind paſſion moveth, or wanton fancy prompteth, or the tempter ſuggeſteth, often will hit upon aſſerting that which is falſe, or promiſing that which is impoſſible: that want of conſcience and of conſideration which do ſuffer him to violate God's law in ſwearing, will betray him to the venting of lies, which backed with oaths become perjuries. If ſometime what he ſweareth doth happen to be true and performable, it doth not free him of guilt; it being his fortune, rather than his care or conſcience, which keepeth him from perjury.

V. Such ſwearing commonly will induce a man to bind himſelf by oath to unlawful practices; and conſequently will entangle him in a woful neceſſity, either of breaking his oath, or of doing worſe, and committing wickedneſs: ſo that [h] *ſwearing,* as St. Chryſoſtom ſaith, *hath this miſery attending it, that both tranſgreſſed and obſerved it plagueth thoſe who are guilty of it.*

Of this perplexity the holy Scripture affordeth two notable inſtances: the one of Saul, forced to break his raſh oaths; the other of Herod, being engaged thereby to commit a moſt horrid murder.

(1 Sam. xxv. 22. David.)

Διὰ τοὺς ὅρκους. Matt. xiv. 9.

Had Saul obſerved his oaths, what injury had he done, what miſchief had he produced, in ſlaughtering his moſt worthy and moſt innocent ſon, the prop and glory of his family, the bulwark of his country, and the grand inſtrument of ſalvation to it; in forcing the people to violate their croſs oath, and for prevention of one, cauſing many perjuries? He was therefore fain to deſiſt, and lie under the guilt of breaking his oaths.

Vid. Chryſ. ὅτ. Ἀνδρ. 1 Sam. xiv. 45.

[h] Τοῦτο τὸ ἔνιον ἔχει ὁ ὄρκος, ὅτι καὶ παραβαινόμενος καὶ φυλαττόμενος πολλὰς τὰς ἀλισκαρδίας. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. ὅτ. p. 553.

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And for Herod, the excellent Father thus presseth the consideration of his case: [i] *Take*, saith he, *I beseech you, the chopped-off head of St. John, and his warm blood yet trickling down; each of you bear it home with you, and conceive that before your eyes you hear it uttering speech, and saying, Embrace the murderer of me, an oath. That which reproof did not, this an oath did do; that which the tyrant's wrath could not, this the necessity of keeping an oath did effect. For when the tyrant was reprehended publicly in the audience of all men, he bravely did bear the rebuke; but when he had cast himself into the necessity of oaths, then did he cut off that blessed head.*

VI. Likewise the use of rash swearing will often engage a man in undertakings very inconvenient and detrimental to himself. A man is bound to *perform his vows to the Lord*, whatever they be, whatever damage or trouble thence may accrue to him, if they be not unlawful. It is the law, *That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform.* It is the property of a good man, that *he sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.* Wherefore it is the part of a sober man, to be well advised what he doth swear or vow religiously; that he do not put himself into the inextricable strait of committing great sin, or undergoing great inconvenience; that he do not rush into that snare of which the Wise Man speaketh, *It is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy*, (or to swallow a sacred obligation,) *and after vows to make enquiry* [k], seeking how he may disengage himself: the doing which is a folly offensive to God, as the Preacher telleth us; *When*, saith he, *thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.* God will not admit our folly in vowing, as a plea or an excuse for non-performance; he will exact it from us both as a due debt, and as a proper punishment of our impious folly.

Deut. xxiii. 21. Matt. v. 33. Psal. lxvi. 13, 14. Deut. xxiii. 23. Ps. xv. 4. Prov. xx. 25. Eccles. v. 4.

[i] Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου λαβόντας—. Ἀνδρ. ιδ. p. 552.

[k] Ὥσπερ τινὶ παγίδι κατεχόμενοι, καὶ δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις συνδεδεμένοι, &c. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. ζ.

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For inſtance, into what loſs and miſchief, what ſorrow, what regret and repentance, did the unadviſed vow of Jephtha throw him? the performance whereof, as St. Chryſoſtom remarketh, God did permit, and order to be commemorated with ſolemn lamentation, that all poſterity might be admoniſhed thereby, and deterred from ſuch precipitant ſwearing.

Chryſ. Ἀνδρ. ά.

VII. Let us conſider, that ſwearing is a ſin of all others peculiarly clamorous, and provocative of Divine judgment. God is hardly ſo much concerned, or in a manner conſtrained, to puniſh any other ſin as this. He is bound in honour and intereſt to vindicate his name from the abuſe, his authority from the contempt, his holy ordinance from the profanation, which it doth infer. He is concerned to take care that his providence be not queſtioned, that the dread of his majeſty be not voided, that all religion be not overthrown by the outrageous commiſſion thereof with impunity.

It immediately toucheth his name, it expreſsly calleth upon him to mind it, to judge it, to ſhew himſelf in avenging it. He may ſeem deaf or unconcerned, if, being ſo called and provoked, he doth not declare himſelf.

There is underſtood to be a kind of formal compact between him and mankind, obliging him to interpoſe, to take the matter into his cognizance, being ſpecially addreſſed to him.

The bold ſwearer doth importune him to hear, doth rouſe him to mark, doth brave him to judge and puniſh his wickedneſs.

Zech. v. 2, &c. Chryſ. Ἀνδρ. ά. p. 525. ά. p. 565. ά. p. 591.

Hence no wonder that *the flying roll*, a quick and inevitable *curſe*, doth ſurpriſe the *ſwearer*, and *cut him off* as it is in the Prophet. No wonder that ſo many remarkable inſtances do occur in hiſtory, of ſignal vengeance inflicted on perſons notably guilty of this crime No wonder that a common practice thereof doth fetch down public judgments; and that, as the Prophets of old did proclaim, *becauſe of ſwearing the land mourneth.*

Jer. xxiii. 10. Hoſ. iv. 3.

VIII. Farther, (paſſing over the ſpecial laws againſt it

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the miſchievous conſequences of it, the ſore puniſhments appointed to it,) we may conſider, that to common ſenſe vain ſwearing is a very unreaſonable and ill-favoured practice, greatly miſbecoming any ſober, worthy, or honeſt perſon; but eſpecially moſt abſurd and incongruous to a Chriſtian.

For in ordinary converſation what needful or reaſonable occaſion can intervene of violating this command? If there come under diſcourſe a matter of reaſon, which is evidently true and certain, then what need can there be of an oath to affirm it, it ſufficing to expoſe it to light, or to propoſe the evidences for it? If an obſcure or doubtful point come to be debated, it will not bear an oath; it will be a ſtrange madneſs to dare, a great folly to hope the perſuading it thereby. What were more ridiculous, than to ſwear the truth of a demonſtrable theorem? What more vain, than ſo to aſſert a diſputable problem? Oaths, like wagers, are in ſuch caſes no arguments, except of ſillineſs in the uſers of them.

If a matter of hiſtory be ſtarted, then if a man be taken for honeſt, his word will paſs for atteſtation without farther aſſurance: but if his veracity or probity be doubted, his oath will not be relied on, eſpecially when he doth obtrude it. For it was no leſs truly than acutely ſaid by the old Poet, Οὐκ ἄνδρος ὅρκοι πίστις, ἀλλ' ὅρκων ἀνήρ; Æſchyl. *The man doth not get credit from an oath, but an oath from the man:* and a greater author, [a] *An oath,* ſaith St. Chryſoſtom, *doth not make a man credible; but the teſtimony of his life, and the exactneſs of his converſation, and a good repute. Many often have burſt with ſwearing, and perſuaded no man: others only nodding have deſerved more belief than thoſe who have ſwore ſo mightily.* Wherefore oaths, as they are frivolous coming from a perſon of little worth or conſcience, ſo they are ſuperfluous in the mouth

[a] Οὐκ ὅρκος ἀξιόπιστον ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ βίου μαρτυρία, καὶ πολιτείας ἀκρίβεια, καὶ ὑπόληψις ἀγαθή. πολλοὶ πολλάκις διεῤῥάγησαν ὀμνύντες, καὶ οὐδένα ἔπεισαν· ἕτεροι δὲ, ἐπινεύσαντες μόνον, ἀξιοπιστότεροι τῶν τοσαῦτα ὀμωμοκότων ἠφάνησαν. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. ζ. p. 514.

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of an honeſt and worthy perſon; yea, as they do not increaſe the credit of the former, ſo they may impair that of the latter.

A good man, as Socrates did ſay, *ſhould apparently ſo demean himſelf, that his word may be deemed more credible than an oath*[m]; the conſtant tenor of his practice vouching for it, and giving it ſuch weight, that no aſſeveration can farther corroborate it.

Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 524.

He ſhould τοῖς ἔργοις εὐορκεῖν, *ſwear by his good deeds*, and exhibit βίον ἀξιόπιστον, *a life deſerving belief*, as Clemens Alexandrinus ſaith: ſo that no man ſhould deſire more from him than his bare aſſertion; but willingly ſhould yield him the privilege which the Athenians granted to Xenocrates, that he ſhould teſtify without ſwearing[n].

He ſhould be like the Eſſenes, of whom Joſephus ſaith, that every thing ſpoken by them was more valid than an oath; whence they declined ſwearing[o].

He ſhould ſo much confide in his own veracity and fidelity, and ſo much ſtand upon them, that he ſhould not deign to offer any pledge for them, implying them to want confirmation.

He ſhould, as St. Hierome ſaith, *ſo love truth, that he ſhould ſuppoſe himſelf to have ſworn whatſoever he hath ſaid*[p]; and therefore ſhould not be apt to heap another oath on his words.

Upon ſuch accounts common reaſon directed even Pagan wiſe men wholly to interdict ſwearing in ordinary converſation, or about petty matters, as an irrational and immoral practice, unworthy of ſober and diſcreet perſons.

[m] Δεῖ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας τρόπον ὅρκου πιστότερον φαίνεσθαι παρεχομένους. *Socr. apud Max. Serm.* lxxxv.

Ὁ τοῦ σπουδαίου λόγος ὅρκος ἴσω βέβαιος, ἀκλινὴς, ἀψευδέστατος. *Philo.*

Colendo fidem jurant (Scythæ; *apud Curt.* vii. 8.)

[n] Ἦν δὲ καὶ ἀξιόπιστος σφόδρα· ὥστε μὴ ἐξὸν ἀνώμοτον μαρτυρεῖν, τούτῳ μόνῳ συνεχώρουν Ἀθηναῖοι. *Diog. Laert. in Xenocr.*

[o] Πᾶν τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἰσχυρότερον ὅρκου, τὸ δὲ ὀμνύειν αὐτοῖς παρῄτηται. *Joſeph.*

[p] Tantus in te ſit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes. *Hier. Ep.* xiv.

Forbear swearing about any matter, said Plato, cited by Clem. Alex.[q] *Avoid swearing, if you can, wholly*, said Epictetus[r]. *For money swear by no god, though you swear truly*, said Isocrates[s]. And divers the like precepts occur in other heathens; the mention whereof may well serve to strike shame into many loose and vain people, bearing the name of Christians.

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Indeed, for a true and real Christian, this practice doth especially in a far higher degree misbecome him, upon considerations peculiar to his high calling and holy profession.

Plutarch telleth us, that among the Romans the Flamen of Jupiter was not permitted to swear: of which law among other reasons he assigneth this; *Because it is not handsome, that he, to whom divine and greatest things are entrusted, should be distrusted about small matters*[t]. The which reason may well be applied to excuse every Christian from it, who is a priest to the most High God, and hath the most celestial and important matters concredited to him; in comparison to which all other matters are very mean and inconsiderable. The dignity of his rank should render his word *verbum honoris*, passable without any farther engagement. He hath opinions of things, he hath undertaken practices inconsistent with swearing. For he that firmly doth believe that God is ever present with him, an auditor and witness of all his discourse; he that is persuaded that a severe judgment shall pass on him, wherein he must *give an account for every idle word* which slippeth from him, and wherein, among other offenders, assuredly *liars* will be condemned to the burning lake; he that in a great sacrament (once most solemnly taken, and frequently renewed) hath engaged and sworn, together with all other Divine com-

Matt. xii. 36.

Rev. xxi. 8. xxii. 15.

q Ὅρκος περὶ παντὸς ἀπέστω. *Plato apud Clem. Alex. Str.* v. p. 433.

r Ὅρκον παραίτησον, εἰ μὲν οἷόν τε, εἰς ἅπαν. *Epict. Ench.* cap. xliv.

s Ἕνεκα χρημάτων μηδένα θεὸν ὀμόσῃς, μηδ' ἂν εὐορκεῖν μέλλῃς. *Isocr. ad Demon.*

t Διατὶ τῷ ἱερεῖ τοῦ Διὸς, οὐκ ἔξεστιν ὀμόσαι; ἢ ὅτι περὶ μικρῶν ἀπιστεῖσθαι τὸν τὰ θεῖα καὶ μέγιστα πεπιστευμένον οὐκ εἰκός ἐστιν; *Plut. in Qu. Rom.* p. 421.

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mandments, to obſerve thoſe which moſt expreſsly do charge him to be exactly juſt, faithful, and veracious in all his words and deeds; who therefore ſhould be ready to ſay with David, *I have ſworn, and am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to keep thy righteous judgments;* to him [u] every word hath the force of an oath; every lie, every breach of promiſe, every violation of faith doth involve perjury: for him to ſwear, is falſe heraldry, an impertinent accumulation of one oath upon another: he of all men ſhould diſdain to allow that his words are not perfectly credible, that his promiſe is not ſecure, without being aſſured by an oath.

Col. iii. 9. Eph. iv. 25. 1 Pet. ii. 1. Pſal. cxix. 106.

IX. Indeed the practice of ſwearing greatly diſparageth him that uſeth it, and derogateth from his credit upon divers accounts.

It ſignifieth, (if it ſignifieth any thing,) that he doth not confide in his own reputation, and judgeth his own bare word not to deſerve credit: for why, if he taketh his word to be good, doth he back it with aſſeverations? why, if he deemeth his own honeſty to bear proof, doth he cite Heaven to warrant it?

It is, ſaith St. Baſil, *a very foul and ſilly thing for a man to accuſe himſelf as unworthy of belief, and to proffer an oath for ſecurity* [x].

By ſo doing a man doth authorize others to diſtruſt him: for it can be no wrong to diſtruſt him, who doth not pretend to be a credible perſon, or that his ſaying alone may ſafely be taken; who, by ſuſpecting that others are not ſatisfied with his ſimple aſſertion, implieth a reaſon known to himſelf for it.

It rendereth whatever he ſaith to be in reaſon ſuſpicious, as diſcovering him void of conſcience and diſcretion: for he that flatly againſt the rules of duty and reaſon will ſwear vainly, what can engage him to ſpeak truly [y]? He that is ſo looſe in ſo clear and ſo conſidera-

[u] Omnis ſermo fidelis pro jurejurando eſt. *Hier. in Matt.* v.

[x] Αἰσχρὸν παντελῶς καὶ ἀνόητον, ἑαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖν ὡς ἀναξίου πίστεως, καὶ τὴν τῶν ὅρκων ἀσφάλειαν ἐπιφέρεσθαι. *Baſ. in Pſal.* xiv.

[y] Ἤδη γὰρ ὅ γε ὀμνὺς εἰς ἀπιστίαν ὑπονοεῖται. *Philo.*

ble a point of obedience to God, how can he be ſuppoſed ſtaunch in regard to any other? *It being*, as Ariſtotle hath it, *the part of the ſame men to do ill things, and not to regard forſwearing*[z]. It will at leaſt conſtrain any man to ſuſpect all his diſcourſe of vanity and unadviſedneſs, ſeeing he plainly hath no care to bridle his tongue from ſo groſs an offence. SERM. XV.

It is ſtrange therefore, that any man of honour or honeſty ſhould not ſcorn, by ſuch a practice, to ſhake his own credit, or to detract from the validity of his word; which ſhould ſtand firm on itſelf, and not want any atteſtation to ſupport it. It is a privilege of honourable perſons, that they are excuſed from ſwearing, and that their *verbum honoris* paſſeth in lieu of an oath: is it not then ſtrange, that when others diſpenſe with them, they ſhould not diſpenſe with themſelves; but voluntarily degrade themſelves, and with ſin forfeit ſo noble a privilege?

X. To excuſe theſe faults, the ſwearer will be forced to confeſs, that his oaths are no more than waſte and inſignificant words; deprecating being taken for ſerious, or to be underſtood that he meaneth any thing by them; but only that he uſeth them as expletive phraſes, πρὸς ἀναπλήρωσιν λόγου, to plump his ſpeech, and fill up ſentences. But ſuch pleas do no more than ſuggeſt other faults of ſwearing, and good arguments againſt it; its impertinence, its abuſe of ſpeech, its diſgracing the practiſer of it in point of judgment and capacity. For ſo it is, oaths as they commonly paſs are mere excreſcences of ſpeech, which do nothing but encumber and deform it; they ſo embelliſh diſcourſe, as a wen or a ſcab do beautify a face, as a patch or a ſpot do adorn a garment. Hierocl. Philo.

To what purpoſe, I pray, is God's name hooked and haled into our idle talk? why ſhould we ſo often mention him, when we do not mean any thing about him? would it not, into every ſentence to foiſt a dog or a horſe,

[z] Τῶν αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἀνθρώπων τὰ πονηρὰ πράττειν, καὶ μὴ φροντίζειν ἐπιορκοῦντας. *Ariſt. Rhet. ad Alex.* cap. xviii.

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What do theſe ſuperfluities ſignify, but that the venter of them doth little ſkill the uſe of ſpeech, or the rule of converſation, but meaneth to ſputter and prate any thing without judgment or wit; that his invention is very barren, his fancy beggarly, craving the aid of any ſtuff to relieve it? One would think a man of ſenſe ſhould grutch to lend his ear, or incline his attention to ſuch motley ragged diſcourſe; that without nauſeating he ſcarce ſhould endure to obſerve men laviſhing time, and ſquandering their breath ſo frivolouſly. It is an affront to good company to peſter it with ſuch talk.

XI. But farther, upon higher accounts this is a very uncivil and unmannerly practice.

Some vain perſons take it for a genteel and graceful thing, a ſpecial accompliſhment, a mark of fine breeding, a point of high gallantry: for who, forſooth, is the brave ſpark, the complete gentleman, the man of converſation and addreſs, but he that hath the ſkill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a ſkill! how mad a confidence!) to lard every ſentence with an oath or a curſe; making bold at every turn to ſalute his Maker, or to ſummon him in atteſtation of his tattle; not to ſay, calling and challenging the Almighty to damn and deſtroy him? Such a conceit, I ſay, too many have of ſwearing, becauſe a cuſtom thereof, together with divers other fond and baſe qualities, hath prevailed among ſome people, bearing the name and garb of gentlemen.

But in truth there is no practice more croſſing the genuine nature of genteelneſs, or miſbecoming perſons well born and well bred; who ſhould excel the rude vulgar in goodneſs, in courteſy, in nobleneſs of heart, in unwillingneſs to offend, and readineſs to oblige thoſe with whom they converſe, in ſteady compoſedneſs of mind and manners, in diſdaining to ſay or do any unworthy, any unhandſome things.

For this practice is not only a groſs rudeneſs toward the main body of men, who juſtly reverence the name of

God, and deteſt ſuch an abuſe thereof; not only, farther, an inſolent defiance of the common profeſſion, the religion, the law of our country, which diſalloweth and condemneth it; but it is very odious and offenſive to any particular ſociety or company, at leaſt wherein there is any ſober perſon, any who retaineth a ſenſe of goodneſs, or is anywiſe concerned for God's honour: for to any ſuch perſon no language can be more diſguſtful; nothing can more grate his ears, or fret his heart, than to hear the ſovereign object of his love and eſteem ſo mocked and ſlighted; to ſee the law of his Prince ſo diſloyally infringed, ſo contemptuouſly trampled on; to find his beſt Friend and Benefactor ſo outrageouſly abuſed. To give him the lie were a compliment, to ſpit in his face were an obligation, in compariſon to this uſage. SERM. XV.

Wherefore it is a wonder, that any perſon of rank, any that hath in him a ſpark of ingenuity, or doth at all pretend to good manners, ſhould find in his heart or deign to comply with ſo ſcurvy a faſhion; a faſhion much more befitting the ſcum of the people, than the flower of the gentry; yea rather much below any man endued with a ſcrap of reaſon, or a grain of goodneſs. Would we bethink ourſelves, modeſt, ſober, and pertinent diſcourſe would appear far more generous and maſculine, than ſuch mad hectoring the Almighty, ſuch boiſterous inſulting over the received laws and general notions of mankind, ſuch ruffianly ſwaggering againſt ſobriety and goodneſs. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their anceſtors, the founders of their quality; that gallant courage, that ſolid wiſdom, that noble courteſy, which advanced their families, and ſevered them from the vulgar; this degenerate wantonneſs and ſordidneſs of language would return to the dunghill, or rather, which God grant, be quite baniſhed from the world; the vulgar following their example.

XII. Farther, the words of our Lord, when he forbad this practice, do ſuggeſt another conſideration againſt it, deducible from the cauſes and ſources of it; from whence it cometh, that men are ſo inclined or addicted

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thereto: *Let,* ſaith he, *your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil.* The roots of it he aſſureth us are evil, and therefore the fruit cannot be good: it is no grape which groweth from thorns, or fig from thiſtles. Conſult experience, and obſerve whence it doth proceed.

Matt. v. 37.

Sometimes it ariſeth from exorbitant heats of ſpirit, or tranſports of unbridled paſſion. When a man is keenly peeviſh, or fiercely angry, or eagerly contentious, then he bluſtereth, and diſchargeth his choler in moſt tragical ſtrains; then he would fright the objects of his diſpleaſure by the moſt violent expreſſions thereof. This is ſometime alleged in excuſe of raſh ſwearing; *I was provoked,* the ſwearer will ſay, *I was in paſſion:* but it is ſtrange, that a bad cauſe ſhould juſtify a bad effect; that one crime ſhould warrant another; that what would ſpoil a good action ſhould excuſe a bad one.

Sometimes it proceedeth from arrogant conceit, and a tyrannical humour; when a man fondly admireth his own opinion, and affecting to impoſe it on others, is thence moved to thwack it on with luſty aſſeverations.

Ἀλαζονία. 2 Cor. i. 17.

Sometimes it iſſueth from wantonneſs and levity of mind, diſpoſing a man to ſport with any thing, how ſerious, how grave, how ſacred and venerable ſoever.

Sometimes its riſe is from ſtupid inadvertency, or heady precipitancy; when the man doth not heed what he ſaith, or conſider the nature and conſequence of his words, but ſnatcheth any expreſſion which cometh next, or which his roving fancy doth offer; for want of that caution of the Pſalmiſt, *I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*

Pſ. xxxix. 1. cxli. 3.

Sometimes (alas! how often in this miſerable age!) it doth ſpring from profane boldneſs; when men deſign to put affronts on religion, and to diſplay their ſcorn and ſpite againſt conſcience; affecting the reputation of ſtout blades, of gallant hectors, of reſolute giants, who dare do any thing, who are not afraid to defy Heaven, and brave God Almighty himſelf.

Sometimes it is derived from apiſh imitation, or a humour to comply with a faſhion current among vain and diſſolute perſons. SERM. XV. (Pſ. xxvi. 4.)

It always doth come from a great defect of conſcience, of reverence to God, of love to goodneſs, of diſcretion and ſober regard to the welfare of a man's ſoul.

From ſuch evidently vicious and unworthy ſources it proceedeth, and therefore muſt needs be very culpable. No good, no wiſe man can like actions drawn from ſuch principles. Matt. vii. 16. Farther,

XIII. This offence may be particularly aggravated by conſidering, that it hath no ſtrong temptation alluring to it; that it yieldeth no ſenſible advantage; that it moſt eaſily may be avoided or corrected.

Every ſin, ſaith St. Chryſoſtom, *hath not the ſame puniſhment; but thoſe things which may eaſily be reformed do bring on us greater puniſhment* [a]: and what can be more eaſy than to reform this fault? *Tell me*, ſaith he, *what difficulty, what ſweat, what art, what hazard, what more doth it require, beſide a little care* [b], to abſtain wholly from it? It is but willing, or reſolving on it, and it is inſtantly done: for there is not any natural inclination diſpoſing to it, any ſtrong appetite to detain us under its power.

It gratifieth no ſenſe, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour; for the ſound of it is not very melodious, and no man ſurely did ever get an eſtate by it, or was preferred to dignity for it. It rather to any good ear maketh a horrid and jarring noiſe; it rather with the beſt part of the world produceth diſpleaſure, damage, and diſgrace. What therefore beſide monſtrous vanity, and unaccountable perverſeneſs, ſhould hold men ſo devoted thereto?

Surely of all dealers in ſin the ſwearer is palpably the fillieſt, and maketh the worſt bargains for himſelf; for he ſinneth gratis, and, like thoſe in the Prophet, *ſelleth* Iſa. lii. 3.

[a] Οὐ γὰρ δὴ πᾶν ἁμάρτημα τὴν αὐτὴν φέρει κόλασιν· ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐπανορθώτα μᾶλλον ἡμῖν ἐπάγει τὴν τιμωρίαν. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. ι'. p. 531.

[b] Εἶπε μοι ποίαν δυσκολίαν, &c. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. ιθ'. p. 594. ι'. p. 499. ϐ'. p. 489.

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his ſoul for nothing. An epicure hath ſome reaſon to allege, an extortioner is a man of wiſdom, and acteth prudently in compariſon to him; for they enjoy ſome pleaſure, or acquire ſome gain here, in lieu of their ſalvation hereafter: but this fondling offendeth Heaven, and abandoneth happineſs, he knoweth not why or for what. He hath not ſo much as the common plea of human infirmity to excuſe him; he can hardly ſay that he was tempted thereto by any bait [c].

A fantaſtic humour poſſeſſeth him of ſpurning at piety and ſoberneſs; he inconſiderately followeth a herd of wild fops; he affecteth to play the ape. What more than this can he ſay for himſelf?

XIV. Finally, let us conſider, that as we ourſelves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly deſigned and framed to glorify our Maker; (the which to do is indeed the greateſt perfection and nobleſt privilege of our nature;) ſo our tongue and ſpeaking faculty were given to us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to exhibit our due love and gratitude toward him, to profeſs our truſt and confidence in him, to celebrate his praiſes, to avow his benefits, to addreſs our ſupplications to him, to maintain all kinds of devotional intercourſe with him, to propagate our knowledge, fear, love, and obedience to him, in all ſuch ways to promote his honour and ſervice. This is the moſt proper, worthy, and due uſe of our tongue, for which it was created, to which it is dedicated, from whence it becometh, as it is ſo often ſtyled, our *glory*, and the beſt member that we have; that whereby we excel all creatures here below, and whereby we are no leſs diſcriminated from them than by our reaſon; that whereby we conſort with the bleſſed angels above in the diſtinct utterance of praiſe, and communication of glory to our Creator [d]. Wherefore ap-

Pſ. xvi. 9. xxx. 12. lvii. 8. cviii. 1.

[c] Οὗτος δὲ, οὐδεμιᾶς ἀνάγκης αὐτὸν βιαζομένης, ὑπὸ ἀνοίας μόνης εἰς τὸ βάραθρον καταπίπτει τῆς ἁμαρτίας. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. ι'. p. 531. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτοί τινα πρόφασιν ἴσχυσι προβαλέσθαι, ἀλλὰ καταφρόνησιν μόνον. Ibid.

[d] Hoc enim uno præſtamus vel maxime feris, quod colloquimur inter nos, et quod exprimere dicendo ſenſa poſſumus. *Cic. de Orat.* i.

plying this to any impious diſcourſe, with this to profane God's bleſſed name, with this to violate his holy commands, with this to unhallow his ſacred ordinance, with this to offer diſhonour and indignity to him, is a moſt unnatural abuſe, an horrid ingratitude toward him. SERM. XV.

It is that indeed whereby we render this noble organ incapable of any good uſe. For how (as the excellent Father doth often urge) can we pray to God for mercies, or praiſe God for his benefits, or heartily confeſs our ſins, or cheerfully partake of the holy myſteries, with a mouth defiled by impious oaths, with a heart guilty of ſo heinous diſobedience? πῶς εὐξό-μεθα—; *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. *ιδ'.* p. 559. *ιε'.* p. 538.

Likewiſe, whereas a ſecondary, very worthy uſe of our ſpeech is, to promote the good of our neighbour, and eſpecially to edify him in piety, according to that wholeſome precept of the Apoſtle, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers;* the practice of ſwearing is an abuſe very contrary to that good purpoſe, ſerving to corrupt our neighbour, and to inſtil into him a contempt of religion; or, however, grievouſly to ſcandalize him. Eph. iv. 29.

XV. I ſhall add but two words more. One is, that we would ſeriouſly conſider, that our bleſſed Saviour, who loved us ſo dearly, who did and ſuffered ſo much for us, who redeemed us by his blood, who ſaid unto us, *If ye love me, keep my commandments,* he thus poſitively hath enjoined, *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all:* and how then can we find in our heart directly to thwart his word? Joh. xiv. 15. Matt. v. 34.

The other is, that we would lay to heart the reaſon whereby St. James doth enforce the point, and the ſting in the cloſe of our text, wherewith I conclude; *But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, leſt ye fall into condemnation,* or, [a] *leſt ye fall under damnation.* From the which infinite miſchief, and from all ſin that may cauſe it, God in mercy deliver us through our bleſſed Redeemer Jeſus, to whom for ever be all glory and praiſe. [a] μὴ ὑπὸ κρίσιν πίπτητε.

SERMON XVI.

OF EVIL-SPEAKING IN GENERAL.

TITUS iii. 2.

—To ſpeak evil of no man.

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THESE words do imply a double duty; one incumbent on teachers, another on the people who are to be inſtructed by them.

The teacher's duty appeareth from reflecting on the words of the context, which govern theſe, and make them up an entire ſentence; *Put them in mind*, or, rub up their memory to do thus. It is St. Paul's injunction to Titus, a biſhop and paſtor of the church, that he ſhould admoniſh the people committed to his care and inſtruction, as of other great duties, (of yielding obedience to magiſtrates, of behaving themſelves peaceably, of practiſing meekneſs and equity toward all men, of being *readily* diſpoſed *to every good work*,) ſo particularly of this, μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, *to revile*, or *ſpeak evil of no man*.

Ὑπομίμνησκε αὐτούς.

Whence it is apparent, that this is one of the principal duties that preachers are obliged to mind people of, and to preſs upon them. And if this were needful then, when charity, kindled by ſuch inſtructions and examples, was ſo lively; when Chriſtians, by their ſufferings, were ſo inured to meekneſs and patience; even every one, for the honour of his religion, and the ſafety of his perſon, was concerned in all reſpects to demean himſelf innocently

and inoffenſively; then is it now eſpecially requiſite, S when (ſuch engagements and reſtraints being taken off, love being cooled, perſecution being extinct, the tongue being ſet looſe from all extraordinary curbs) the tranſgreſſion of this duty is grown ſo prevalent and rife, that evil-ſpeaking is almoſt as common as ſpeaking, ordinary converſation extremely abounding therewith, that miniſters ſhould diſcharge their office in dehorting and diſſuading from it.

Well indeed it were, if by their example of uſing mild and moderate diſcourſe, of abſtaining from virulent invectives, tauntings, and ſcoffings, good for little but to inflame anger, and infuſe ill-will, they would lead men to good practice of this ſort: for no examples can be ſo wholeſome, or ſo miſchievous to this purpoſe, as thoſe which come down from the pulpit, the place of edification, backed with ſpecial authority and advantage.

However, it is to preachers a ground of aſſurance, and matter of ſatisfaction, that in preſſing this duty they ſhall perform their duty: their text being not ſo much of their own chooſing, as given them by St. Paul; they can ſurely ſcarce find a better to diſcourſe upon: it cannot be a matter of ſmall moment or uſe, which this great maſter and guide ſo expreſsly directeth us to inſiſt upon. And to the obſervance of his precept, ſo far as concerneth me, I ſhall immediately apply myſelf.

It is then the duty of all Chriſtian people, (to be taught, and preſſed on them,) *not to reproach*, or *ſpeak evil of any man*. The which duty, for your inſtruction, I ſhall firſt endeavour ſomewhat to explain, declaring its import and extent; then, for your farther edification, I ſhall inculcate it, propoſing ſeveral inducements perſuaſive to the obſervance of it.

I. For explication, we may firſt conſider the object of it, *no man*; then the act itſelf, which is prohibited, *to blaſpheme*, that is, to reproach, to revile, or, as we have it rendered, *to ſpeak evil*.

No man. St. Paul queſtionleſs did eſpecially mean hereby to hinder the Chriſtians at that time from re-

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proaching the Jews and the Pagans among whom they lived, men in their lives very wicked and corrupt, men in opinion extremely diſſenting from them, men who greatly did hate, and cruelly did perſecute them; of whom therefore they had mighty provocations and temptations to ſpeak ill; their judgment of the perſons, and their reſentment of injuries, making it difficult to abſtain from doing ſo. Whence by a manifeſt analogy may be inferred, that the object of this duty is very large, indeed univerſal and unlimited: that we muſt forbear reproach not only againſt pious and virtuous perſons, againſt perſons of our own judgment or party, againſt thoſe who never did harm or offend us, againſt our relations, our friends, our benefactors; in reſpect of whom there is no ground or temptation of ill-ſpeaking; but even againſt the moſt unworthy and wicked perſons, againſt thoſe who moſt diſcoaſt in opinion and practice from us, againſt thoſe who never did oblige us, yea thoſe who have moſt diſobliged us, even againſt our moſt bitter and ſpiteful enemies. There is no acception or excuſe to be admitted from the quality, ſtate, relation, or demeanour of men; the duty (according to the proper ſenſe, or due qualifications and limits of the act) doth extend to all men: for, *Speak evil of no man.*

As for the act, it may be inquired what the word βλασφημεῖν, *to blaſpheme,* doth import. I anſwer, that it is to vent words concerning any perſon which do ſignify in us ill opinion, or contempt, anger, hatred, enmity conceived in our minds toward him; which are apt in him to kindle wrath, and breed ill blood toward us; which tend to beget in others that hear ill conceit, or ill-will toward him; which are much deſtructive of his reputation, prejudicial to his intereſts, productive of damage or miſchief to him. It is otherwiſe in Scripture termed λοιδορεῖν, *to rail* or *revile,* (to uſe bitter and ignominious language;) ὀβριζειν, *to ſpeak contumeliouſly;* φέρειν βλάσφημον κρίσιν, *to bring railing accuſation,* (or reproachful cenſure;) καταλαλεῖν, to uſe *obloquy,* or *obtrectation;* καταρᾶσθαι, *to curſe,* that is, to ſpeak words importing that we do wiſh ill to a perſon.

Luke xi. 45. 2 Pet. ii. 11. Jude 9. Jam. iv. 11. Rom. xii. 14. Luke vi. 28. (2 Sam. xvi. 10.)

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Such is the language we are prohibited to uſe. To which purpoſe we may obſerve, that whereas in our converſation and commerce with men, there do frequently occur occaſions to ſpeak of men, and to men, words apparently diſadvantageous to them, expreſſing our diſſent in opinion from them, or a diſlike in us of their proceedings, we may do this in different ways and terms; ſome of them gentle and moderate, ſignifying no ill mind or diſaffection toward them; others harſh and ſharp, arguing height of diſdain, diſguſt, or deſpite, whereby we bid them defiance, and ſhew that we mean to exaſperate them. Thus, telling a man that we differ in judgment from him, or conceive him not to be in the right, and calling him a liar, a deceiver, a fool; ſaying that he doeth amiſs, taketh a wrong courſe, tranſgreſſeth the rule, and calling him diſhoneſt, unjuſt, wicked; (to omit more odious and provoking names, unbecoming this place, and not deſerving our notice;) are ſeveral ways of expreſſing the ſame things: whereof the latter, in relating paſſages concerning our neighbour, or in debating caſes with him, is prohibited: for thus the words *reproaching*, (Acts xx 3, 4, 5.) *reviling*, *railing*, *curſing*, and the like, do ſignify; and thus our Lord himſelf doth explain them, in his divine ſermon, wherein he doth enact this law; *Whoſoever*, Matt. v. ſaith he, *ſhall ſay to his brother, Raca*, (that is, vain man, or liar,) *ſhall be in danger of the council: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell fire;* that is, he rendereth himſelf liable to a ſtrict account, and to ſevere condemnation before God, who uſeth contemptuous and contumelious expreſſions toward his neighbour, in proportion to the malignity of ſuch expreſſions.

The reaſon of things alſo doth help to explain thoſe words, and to ſhew why they are prohibited: becauſe thoſe harſh terms are needleſs; mild words ſerving as well to expreſs the ſame things: becauſe they are commonly unjuſt, loading men with greater defect or blame than they can be proved to deſerve, or their actions do import: (for every man that ſpeaketh falſehood is not therefore a liar, every man that erreth is not thence a

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fool, every man that doeth amiſs is not conſequently diſhoneſt or wicked; the ſecret intentions and the habitual diſpoſitions of men not being always to be collected from their outward actions:) becauſe they are uncharitable, ſignifying that we entertain the worſt opinions of men, and make the worſt conſtruction of their doings, and are diſpoſed to ſhew them no favour or kindneſs: becauſe alſo they produce miſchievous effects, ſuch as ſpring from the worſt paſſions raiſed by them.

This in groſs is the meaning of the precept. But ſince there are ſome other precepts ſeeming to claſh with this; ſince there are caſes wherein we are allowed to uſe the harſher ſort of terms, there are great examples in appearance thwarting this rule; therefore it may be requiſite for determining the limits of our duty, and diſtinguiſhing it from tranſgreſſion, that ſuch exceptions or reſtrictions ſhould be ſomewhat declared.

1. Firſt then, we may obſerve, that it may be allowable to perſons anywiſe concerned in the proſecution or adminiſtration of juſtice, to ſpeak words which in private intercourſe would be reproachful. A witneſs may impeach of crimes hurtful to juſtice, or public tranquillity; a judge may challenge, may rebuke, may condemn an offender in proper terms, (or forms of ſpeech preſcribed by law,) although moſt diſgraceful and diſtaſteful to the guilty: for it belongeth to the majeſty of public juſtice to be bold, blunt, ſevere; little regarding the concerns or paſſions of particular perſons, in compariſon to the public welfare.

A teſtimony therefore or ſentence againſt a criminal, which materially is a reproach, and morally would be ſuch in a private mouth, is not yet formally ſo according to the intent of this rule. For practices of this kind, which ſerve the exigencies of juſtice, are not to be interpreted as proceeding from anger, hatred, revenge, any bad paſſion or humour; but in way of needful diſcipline for God's ſervice, and common benefit of men. It is not indeed ſo much the miniſter of juſtice, as God himſelf, our abſolute Lord, as the Sovereign, God's repreſentative,

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ſling in the public behalf, as the commonwealth itſelf, who by his mouth do rebuke the obnoxious perſon.

2. God's miniſters in religious affairs, to whom the care of men's inſtruction and edification is committed, are enabled to inveigh againſt ſin and vice, whoever conſequentially may be touched thereby; yea ſometimes it is their duty, with ſeverity and ſharpneſs to reprove particular perſons, not only privately, but publicly, in order to their correction, and edification of others.

Thus St. Paul directeth Timothy; *Them that ſin* (notoriouſly and ſcandalouſly he meaneth) *rebuke before all, that others may fear:* that is in a manner apt to make impreſſion on the minds of the hearers, ſo as to ſcare them from like offences. And to Titus he writes, *Rebuke them ſharply; that they may be ſound in the faith.* And, *Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and ſhew my people their tranſgreſſions, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins,* ſaith the Lord to the Prophet. Such are the charges and commiſſions laid on and granted to his meſſengers.

1 Tim. v. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. i. 13. Iſa. lviii. 1.

Thus may we obſerve that God's Prophets of old, St. John the Baptiſt, our Lord himſelf, the holy Apoſtles did in terms moſt vehement and biting reprove the age in which they lived, and ſome particular perſons in them. The Prophets are full of declamations and invectives againſt the general corruption of their times, and againſt the particular manners of ſome perſons in them. *Ah ſinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a ſeed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They are all adulterers, an aſſembly of treacherous men; and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherleſs, neither doth the cauſe of the widow come before them. The prophets prophefy falſely, and the prieſts rule by their means. As troops of robbers wait for a man, ſo the company of prieſts murder in the way by conſent, and commit lewdneſs.* Such is their ſtyle commonly. St. John the Baptiſt calleth the Scribes and Phariſees *a generation of vipers.* Our Saviour ſpeaketh of them in the ſame terms; calleth

Vide Hier. in Pelag. i. 9. Iſa. i. 4. Jer. ix. 2, 3. Iſa. i. 23. Hoſ. ix. 15. Ezek. xxii. 6, 27. Jer. v. 31. xiv. 14. Hoſ. vi. 9. Ezek. xxii. 26. Mic. iii. 11. Zeph. iii. 4. Matt. iii. 7.

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them an *evil and adulterous generation, ſerpents, and children of vipers; Hypocrites, painted ſepulchres, obſcure graves,* (μνημεῖα ἄδηλα,) *blind guides, fools and blind, children of the devil.* St. Paul likewiſe calleth the ſchiſmatical and heretical teachers, [a] *Dogs, falſe apoſtles, evil and deceitful workers, men of corrupt minds, reprobates and abominable.* With the like colours do St. Peter, St. Jude, and other the Apoſtles, paint them. Which ſort of ſpeeches are to be ſuppoſed to proceed, not from private paſſion or deſign, but out of holy zeal for God's honour, and from earneſt charity toward men, for to work their amendment and common edification. They were uttered alſo by ſpecial wiſdom and peculiar order; from God's authority and in his name: ſo that as God by them is ſaid to preach, to entreat, to warn, and to exhort; ſo by them alſo he may be ſaid to reprehend and reproach.

Matt. xvi. 4. xii. 34, 39. xxiii. 13, &c. xv. 7, 14. xvi. 3. xxii. 18. Luke xii. 1. xi. 44. Matt. xxiii. 24. 17. Joh. viii. 44. [a] Phil. iii. 2. 2 Cor. xi. 13. 1 Tim. vi. 5. 2 Tim. iii. 8. Tit. i. 16. 2 Cor. v. 20. Col. i. 28.

3. Even private perſons in due ſeaſon, with diſcretion and temper, may reprove others, whom they obſerve to commit ſin, or follow bad courſes, out of charitable deſign, and with hope to reclaim them. This was an office of charity impoſed anciently even upon the Jews; much more doth it lie upon Chriſtians, who are obliged more earneſtly to tender the ſpiritual good of thoſe who by the ſtricter and more holy bands of brotherhood are allied to them. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother; thou ſhalt in anywiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him,* was a precept of the old law: and, νουθετεῖν ἀτάκτους, *to admoniſh the diſorderly,* is an evangelical rule. Such perſons we are enjoined to ſhun and decline: but firſt we muſt endeavour by ſober advice and admonition to reclaim them; we muſt not thus reject them till they appear contumacious and incorrigible, refuſing to hear us, or becoming deaf to reproof. This, although it neceſſarily doth include ſetting out their faults, and charging blame on them, (anſwerable to their offences,) is not the culpable reproach here meant, it being needful toward a wholeſome effect, and proceeding from charitable intention.

Lev. xix. 17. 1 Theſſ. v. 14. 1 Tim. vi. 5. Rom. xvi. 17. Tit. iii. 10. 2 Theſſ. iii. 6. Matt. xviii. 17.

4. Some vehemency (ſome ſmartneſs and ſharpneſs) of

ſpeech may ſometimes be uſed in defence of truth, and impugning errors of bad conſequence; eſpecially when it concerneth the intereſt of truth, that the reputation and authority of its adverſaries ſhould ſomewhat be abaſed or abated. If by a partial opinion or reverence toward them, however begotten in the minds of men, they ſtrive to overbear or diſcountenance a good cauſe, their faults, ſo far as truth permitteth and need requireth, may be detected and diſplayed. For this cauſe particularly may we preſume our Lord (otherwiſe ſo meek in his temper, and mild in his carriage toward all men) did characterize the Jewiſh Scribes in ſuch terms, that their authority (being then ſo prevalent with the people) might not prejudice the truth, and hinder the efficacy of his doctrine. This is part of that ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ πίστει, that duty of *contending earneſtly for the faith*, which is incumbent on us. SERM. XVI. Jude 3.

5. It may be excuſable upon particular emergent occaſions, with ſome heat of language to expreſs diſlike of notorious wickedneſs. As our Lord doth againſt the perverſe incredulity and ſtupidity in the Phariſees, their profane miſconſtruction of his words and actions, their malicious oppoſing truth, and obſtructing his endeavours in God's ſervice. As St. Peter did to Simon Magus, telling him, that he *was in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity*. As St. Paul to Elymas the ſorcerer, when he *withſtood him, and deſired to turn away the deputy, Sergius, from the faith; O*, ſaid he, ſtirred with a holy zeal and indignation, *thou full of all ſubtilty and all miſchief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs, wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* The ſame ſpirit, which enabled him to inflict a ſore puniſhment on that wicked wretch, did prompt him to uſe that ſharp language toward him; unqueſtionably deſerved, and ſeaſonably pronounced. As alſo, when the High Prieſt commanded him illegally and unjuſtly to be miſuſed, that ſpeech from a mind juſtly ſenſible of ſuch outrage broke forth, *God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall*. So, when St. Peter preſumptuouſly would have Matt. xvii. 17. Acts viii. 23. Acts xiii. 8. 10. Acts xxiii. 3.

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diſſuaded our Lord from compliance with God's will, in undergoing thoſe croſſes which were appointed to him by God's decree, our Lord calleth him Satan; —Ὑπαγε, Σατανᾶ, *Avaunt, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that are of men.*

Matt. xvi. 23.

Theſe ſort of ſpeeches, iſſuing from juſt and honeſt indignation, are ſometimes excuſable, oftentimes commendable; eſpecially when they come from perſons eminent in authority, of notable integrity, endued with ſpecial meaſures of Divine grace, of wiſdom, of goodneſs; ſuch as cannot be ſuſpected of intemperate anger, of ill nature, of ill will, of ill deſign.

In ſuch caſes as are above mentioned, a ſort of *evil-ſpeaking* about our neighbour may be allowable or excuſable. But for fear of overdoing, great caution and temper is to be uſed; and we ſhould never apply any ſuch limitations as cloaks to palliate unjuſt or uncharitable dealing. Generally it is more adviſable to ſuppreſs ſuch eruptions of paſſion, than to vent it; for ſeldom paſſion hath not inordinate motions joined with it, or tendeth to good ends. And however it will do well to reflect on thoſe caſes, and to remark ſome particulars about them.

Firſt, we may obſerve, that in all theſe caſes all poſſible moderation, equity, and candour are to be uſed; ſo that no ill-ſpeaking be practiſed beyond what is needful or convenient. Even in proſecution of offences, the bounds of truth, of equity, of humanity and clemency are not to be tranſgreſſed. A judge muſt not lay on the moſt criminal perſon more blame, or contumely, than the caſe will bear, or than ſerveth the deſigns of juſtice. However our neighbour doth incur the calamities of ſin and of puniſhment, we muſt not be inſolent or contemptuous toward him. So we may learn by that law of Moſes, backed with a notable reaſon: *And it ſhall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge cauſe him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty ſtripes he may give him*

Deut. xxv. 2, 3.

and not exceed; leſt if he ſhould exceed, and beat him above thoſe ſtripes, then thy brother ſhould ſeem vile unto thee. Whence appears, that we ſhould be careful of not vilifying an offender beyond meaſure. And how mildly governors ſhould proceed in the adminiſtration of juſtice, the example of Joſhua may teach us, who thus examineth Achan, the cauſe of ſo great miſchief to the public; *My ſon, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Iſrael, and make confeſſion unto him; and tell me now what thou haſt done, hide it not from me. My ſon;* what compellation could be more benign and kind? *I pray thee;* what language could be more courteous and gentle? *Give glory to God, and make confeſſion;* what words could be more inoffenſively pertinent? And when he ſentenced that great malefactor, the cauſe of ſo much miſchief, this was all he ſaid, *Why haſt thou troubled us? the Lord will trouble thee;* words void of contumely or inſulting, containing only a cloſe intimation of the cauſe, and a ſimple declaration of the event he was to undergo. SERM. XVI. Joſh. vii. 19, 25.

Secondly, Likewiſe miniſters, in the taxing ſin and ſinners, are to proceed with great diſcretion and caution, with much gentleneſs and meekneſs; ſignifying a tender pity of their infirmities, charitable deſires of their good, the beſt opinion of them, and the beſt hopes for them, that may conſiſt with any reaſon; according to thoſe apoſtolical rules: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs; conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted:* and, *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves:* and more expreſsly, *A ſervant of the Lord muſt not fight, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, patient, in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves.* Thus did St. Peter temper his reproof of Simon Magus with this wholeſome and comfortable advice; *Repent therefore from this thy wickedneſs, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* Gal. vi. 1. Rom. xv. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. Acts viii. 22.

Thirdly, As for fraternal correption, and reproof of faults, when it is juſt and expedient to uſe it, ordinarily

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the calmeſt[a] and mildeſt way is the moſt proper, and moſt likely to obtain good ſucceſs: it commonly doth[b] in a more kindly manner convey the ſenſe thereof into the heart, and therein more powerfully worketh remorſe, than the fierce and harſh way. Clearly to ſhew a man his fault, with the reaſon proving it ſuch, ſo that he becometh throughly convinced of it, is ſufficient to breed in him regret, and to ſhame him before his own mind: to do more, (in way of aggravation, of inſulting on him, of inveighing againſt him,) as it doth often not well conſiſt with humanity, ſo it is ſeldom conſonant to diſcretion, if we do, as we ought, ſeek his health and amendment[c]. Humanity requireth, that when we undertake to reform our neighbour, we ſhould take care not to deform him; (not to diſcourage or diſpleaſe him more than is neceſſary;) when we would correct his manners, that we ſhould alſo conſider his modeſty, and conſult his reputation; *Curam agentes*, as Seneca ſpeaketh, *non tantum ſalutis, ſed et honeſtæ cicatricis*[d]; *having care not only to heal the wound, but to leave a comely ſcar behind. Be*, adviſeth St. Auſtin, *ſo diſpleaſed with iniquity, as to conſider and conſult humanity*[e]: for, *Zeal void of humanity is not*, ſaith St. Chryſoſtom, *zeal, but rather animoſity; and reproof not mixed with good will, appeareth a kind of malignity*[f]. We ſhould ſo rebuke thoſe who, by frailty or folly incident to mankind, have fallen into miſdemeanours, that they may perceive we do ſincerely pity their ill caſe, and tender their good; that we mean not to upbraid their weakneſs, or inſult upon their misfortune; that we delight not to inflict on them more grief than is plainly needful and un-

[a] Reprehenſio contumelia vacare debet. Neque monitio aſpera ſit, nec objurgatio contumelioſa. *Ambroſ. de Offic.* iii. 16.

[b] Prov. xvii. 10. A reproof entereth more into a wiſe man, than a hundred ſtripes into a fool.

[c] Ὁ ἀληθὴς, ὅταν λάβῃ τινὰ πλανώμενον, ἤγαγεν ἐπὶ τὸν νοῦν τὸν δίκαιον· οὐχὶ κατηγορήσας ἢ λοιδορησάμενος ἀπλῶς· ἀλλὰ σὺν δείξει αὐτῷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ὅψει ὅτι ἀκολουθεῖ, &c. *Epiſt.* ii. 12.

[d] Sen. de Clem. i. 7. Vide Chryſ. in Matt. ix. 8. Or. 29.

[e] Ita ſuccenſe iniquitati, ut conſulere memineris humanitatis. *Aug.*

[f] Ζῆλος φιλανθρωπίας πενὴς, οὐ ζῆλος, &c.

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avoidable; that we are conſcious and ſenſible of our own obnoxiouſneſs to the like ſlips or falls, and do *conſider, that we alſo may be tempted*, and being tempted may be overborne. This they cannot perceive, or be perſuaded of, except we temper our ſpeech with benignity and mildneſs. Such ſpeech [s] prudence alſo dictateth, as moſt uſeful and hopeful for producing the good ends honeſt reprehenſion doth aim at; it mollifieth and it melteth a ſtubborn heart, it ſubdueth and winneth a perverſe will, it healeth diſtempered affections. Whereas roughly handling is apt to defeat or obſtruct the cure; rubbing the ſore doth tend to exaſperate and inflame it. Harſh ſpeech rendereth advice odious and unſavoury; driveth from it, and depriveth it of efficacy: it turneth regret for a fault into diſpleaſure and diſdain againſt the reprover: it looks not like the dealing of a kind friend, but like the perſecution of a ſpiteful enemy: it ſeemeth rather an ebullition of gall, or a defluxion from rancour, than an expreſſion of good will: the offender will take it for a needleſs and pitileſs tormenting, or for a proud and tyrannical domineering over him. He that can bear a friendly touch, will not endure to be laſhed with angry and reproachful words. In fine, all reproof ought to be ſeaſoned with diſcretion, with candour, with moderation and meekneſs.

Gal. vi. 1.

2 Theſſ. iii. 15. Μὴ ὡς ἐχθρὸν ἡγεῖσθε, ἀλλὰ νουθετεῖτε ὡς ἀδελφόν.

Fourthly, Likewiſe in defence of truth, and maintenance of a good cauſe, we may obſerve, that commonly the fitteſt language is moſt proper and advantageous, and that reproachful or foul terms are moſt improper and prejudicial. A calm and meek way of diſcourſing doth much advantage a good cauſe, as arguing the patron thereof to have confidence in the cauſe itſelf, and to rely upon his ſtrength; that he is in a temper fit to apprehend it himſelf, and to maintain it; that he propoundeth it as a friend, wiſhing the hearer for his own good to follow it,

[s] Pleaſant words are as an honey-comb, ſweet to the ſoul, and health to the bones. Prov. xvi. 24.

A ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath; but grievous words ſtir up anger. Prov. xv. 1.

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leaving him the liberty to judge and chooſe for himſelf. But rude ſpeech, and contemptuous reflections on perſons, as they do ſignify nothing to the queſtion, ſo they commonly bring much diſadvantage and damage to the cauſe, creating mighty prejudices againſt it [h]: they argue much impotency in the advocate, and conſequently little ſtrength in what he maintains; that he is little able to judge well and altogether unapt to teach others: they intimate a diffidence in himſelf concerning his cauſe, and that, deſpairing to maintain it by reaſon, he ſeeks to uphold it by paſſion; that, not being able to convince by fair means he would bear down by noiſe and clamour; that, not ſkilling to get his ſuit quietly, he would extort it by force obtruding his conceits violently as an enemy, or impoſing them arbitrarily as a tyrant. Thus doth he really diſparage and ſlur his cauſe, however good and defenſible in itſelf. [i]

A modeſt and friendly ſtyle doth ſuit truth; it, like its author, doth uſually reſide (not in the rumbling *wind*, nor in the ſhaking *earthquake*, nor in the raging *fire*, but) in *the ſmall ſtill voice:* ſounding in this, it is moſt audible, moſt penetrant, and moſt effectual: thus propounded, it is willingly hearkened to; for men have no averſation from hearing thoſe who ſeem to love them, and wiſh them well. It is eaſily conceived; no prejudice or paſſion clouding the apprehenſive faculties: it is readily embraced; no animoſity withſtanding or obſtructing it. It is *the ſweetneſs of the lips*, which, as the Wiſe Man telleth us, *increaſeth learning;* diſpoſing a man to hear leſſons of good doctrine, rendering him capable to underſtand them, inſinuating and impreſſing them upon the mind: the affec-

1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

Prov. xvi. 21.

[h] Qui, dum dicit, malus videtur, utique male dicit. *Quint.* vi. 2.

Niſi quod imperitos etiam animoſos atque iracundos eſſe manifeſtum eſt, dum per inopiam concilii et ſermonis ad iracundiam facile vertuntur. *Firmil. apud Cyp.* Ep. 75.

[i] ——— et inhumanum eſt, et ipſi qui dicit inutile; tum cauſæ contrarium, quia plane et adverſarii, fiunt et inimici: et quantulumcunque his virium eſt, contumelia augetur. *Quint.* xii. 9.

tions being thereby unlocked, the paſſage becomes open to the reaſon[k]. SERM. XVI.

But it is plainly a very prepoſterous method of inſtructing, of deciding controverſies, of begetting peace, to vex and anger thoſe concerned by ill language[l]. Nothing ſurely doth more hinder the efficacy of diſcourſe, and prevent conviction, than doth this courſe, upon many obvious accounts. It doth firſt put in a ſtrong bar to attention: for no man willingly doth afford an ear to him, whom he conceiveth diſaffected toward him; which opinion harſh words infallibly will produce: no man can expect to hear truth from him, whom he apprehendeth diſordered in his own mind, whom he ſeeth rude in his proceedings, whom he taketh to be unjuſt in his dealing; as men certainly will take thoſe to be, who preſume to revile others for uſing their own judgment freely, and diſſenting from them in opinion. Again, this courſe doth blind the hearer's mind, ſo that he cannot diſcern what he that pretends to inſtruct him doth mean, or how he doth aſſert his doctrine. Truth will not be diſcerned through the ſmoke of wrathful expreſſions; right being defaced by foul language will not appear; paſſion being excited will not ſuffer a man to perceive the ſenſe, or the force of an argument. The will alſo thereby is hardened and hindered from ſubmitting to truth. In ſuch a caſe, *non perſuadebis, etiamſi perſuaſeris:* although you ſtop his mouth, you cannot ſubdue his heart; although he can no longer fight, yet he never will yield: animoſity raiſed by ſuch uſage rendereth him invincibly obſtinate in his conceits and courſes. Briefly, from this proceeding men become

k Δεῖ γὰρ τὸν μέλλοντά τι τῶν χρησίμων μαθεῖν, πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἡδέως ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν διδάσκοντα· — ἡδέως δὲ ἂν ἔχοι τις σχοίη πρὸς τὸν θρασυνόμενον καὶ τὸν ὑβρίζοντα. *Chryſ. in* 2 *Tim.* Or. 6.

l Ὃν ἴσως ἐκίνησας ἂν τῇ χρηστότητι, τοῦτον ἀπολλύεις τῇ θρασύτητι. *Greg. Naz.* Or. 26.

Οὐ γὰρ ἀπαιδεύτως παιδεύομεν, οὐδὲ ταῖς ὕβρεσι βάλλομεν, ὅτε πάσχουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ, μὴ τῷ λόγῳ μαχόμενοι, τοῖς δὲ λίγεσι, καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειαν ἴσιν ὅτι τῶν λογισμῶν ταῖς ὕβρεσι συγκαλύπτουσις. *Naz.* Or. 32.

Ὅταν πρός τινα ἀηδῶς ἔχωμεν, κἂν ὑγιές τι λίγῃ, οὐ προθύμως οὐδὲ μεθ' ἡδονῆς δεχόμεθα τὰ λεγόμενα. *Chryſ.* Tom. 5. Or. 59.

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unwilling to mark, unfit to apprehend, indiſpoſed, to embrace any good inſtruction or advice: it maketh them indocile and intractable, averſe from better inſtruction, pertinacious in their opinions, and refractory in their ways.

Prov. xxiv. 26. *Every man,* ſaith the Wiſe Man, *ſhall kiſs his lips that giveth a right anſwer:* but no man ſurely will be ready to kiſs thoſe lips which are embittered with reproach, or defiled with dirty language.

It is ſaid of Pericles, that *with thundering and lightning he put Greece into confuſion*[m]: ſuch diſcourſe may ſerve to confound things, it ſeldom tendeth to compoſe them. If reaſon will not pierce, rage will ſcarce avail to drive it in[n]. Satirical virulency may vex men ſorely, but it hardly ever ſoundly converts them. *Few become wiſer or better by ill words.* Children may be frighted into compliance by loud and ſevere increpations; but men are to be allured by rational perſuaſion backed with courteous uſage: they may be ſweetly drawn, they cannot be violently driven to change their judgment and practice. Whence

2 Tim. ii. 25. that advice of the apoſtle, *With meekneſs inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves,* doth no leſs ſavour of wiſdom than of goodneſs.

Fifthly, As for the examples of extraordinary perſons, which in ſome caſes do ſeem to authorize the practice of evil-ſpeaking, we may conſider, that as they had eſpecial commiſſion enabling them to do ſome things beyond ordinary ſtanding rules, wherein they are not to be imitated; as they had eſpecial illumination and direction, which preſerved them from ſwerving in particular caſes from truth and equity; ſo the tenor of their life did evidence, that it was the glory of God, the good of men, the neceſſity of the caſe, which moved them to it[o]. And

[m] Βροντῶν καὶ ἀστράπτων ἰκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

[n] *Chryſ. in* 2 *Tim.* ii. 24. Ὁ γὰρ σφοδρὸς ἔλεγχος, ὅταν μετ' ἰατρικίας γένηται, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μάλιστα δακεῖν δυνάμενος· ἔνεστι γὰρ, ἔνεστι μετὰ πραότητος καθάψασθαι μᾶλλον, ἢ μετὰ θρασύτητος ἐντρίψαι.

[o] This caſe is like the other caſes, wherein the practice of good and great men, although excuſable, is not yet exemplary: as the heroical acts of Da-

of them alſo we may obſerve, that in divers occaſions, yea generally, whenever only their private credit or intereſt were concerned, although grievouſly provoked, they did out of meekneſs, patience, and charity, wholly forbear reproachful ſpeech. Our Saviour, who ſometimes upon ſpecial reaſon in his diſcourſes uſed ſuch harſh words, yet, when he was moſt ſpitefully accuſed, reproached, and perſecuted, *did not open his mouth*, or return one angry word: *Being reviled, he did not*, as St. Peter, propoſing his example to us, telleth us, *revile again; ſuffering, he did not threaten.* He uſed the ſofteſt language to Judas, to the ſoldiers, to Pilate and Herod, to the prieſts, &c. And the apoſtles, who ſometimes inveigh ſo zealouſly againſt the oppoſers and perverters of truth, did in their private converſation and demeanour ſtrictly obſerve their own rules of abſtinence from reproach: *Being reviled we bleſs, being perſecuted we ſuffer it;* ſo doth St. Paul repreſent their practice. And in reaſon we ſhould rather follow them in this their ordinary courſe, than in their extraordinary ſallies of practice.

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1 Pet. ii. 23.

1 Cor. iv. 12. Rom. xii. 14.

In fine, however in ſome caſes and circumſtances the matter may admit ſuch exceptions, ſo that all language diſgraceful to our neighbour is not ever culpable; yet the caſes are ſo few and rare in compariſon, the practice commonly ſo dangerous and tickliſh, that worthily forbearing to reproach doth bear the ſtyle of a general rule: and particularly, for clearer direction, we are in the following caſes obliged carefully to ſhun it; or in ſpeaking about our neighbour we muſt obſerve theſe cautions.

1. We ſhould never in ſevere terms inveigh againſt any man without reaſonable warrant, or preſuming upon a good call and commiſſion thereto. As every man ſhould not aſſume to himſelf the power of adminiſtering juſtice, (of trying, ſentencing, and puniſhing offenders,) ſo muſt not every man take upon him to ſpeak againſt thoſe who ſeem to do ill; which is a ſort of puniſhment, including

vid, of Sampſon, of Ehud, of Phineas, of Elias, of Moſes; David's duel, Sampſon's ſuicide, Moſes's ſlaying the Egyptian, Ehud's ſtabbing the king of Moab, Elias's calling for fire, by extraordinary and peculiar inſtinct.

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the infliction of ſmart and damage upon the perſons concerned. Every man hath indeed a commiſſion, in due place and ſeaſon, with diſcretion and moderation to admoniſh his neighbour offending; but otherwiſe to ſpeak ill of him, no private man hath juſt right or authority: and therefore in preſuming to do it he is diſorderly and irregular, treſpaſſing beyond his bounds, uſurping an undue power to himſelf.

2. We ſhould never ſpeak ill of any man without apparent juſt cauſe. It muſt be juſt: we muſt not reproach men for things innocent or indifferent; for not concurring in diſputable opinions with us, for not complying with our humour, for not ſerving our intereſt, for not doing any thing to which they are not obliged, or for uſing their liberty in any caſe: it muſt be at leaſt ſome conſiderable fault, which we can ſo much as tax. It muſt alſo be clear and certain, notorious and palpable; for to ſpeak ill upon ſlender conjectures, or doubtful ſuſpicions, is full of iniquity. Ὅσα οὐκ οἴδασι, βλασφημοῦσι, *they rail at things which they know not*, is part of thoſe wicked men's character, whom St. Jude doth ſo ſeverely reprehend. If indeed, theſe conditions being wanting, we preſume to reproach any man, we do therein no leſs than ſlander him; which to do is unlawful in any caſe, is in truth a moſt diabolical and deteſtable crime. To impoſe odious names and characters on any perſon, which he deſerveth not, or without ground of truth, is to play the devil; and hell itſelf ſcarce will own a fouler practice.

Jude 10.

3. We ſhould not caſt reproach upon any man without ſome neceſſary reaſon. In charity (that *charity* which *covereth all ſins*, which *covereth a multitude of ſins*) we are bound to connive at the defects, and to conceal the faults of our brethren; to extenuate and excuſe them, when apparent, ſo far as we may in truth and equity. We muſt not therefore ever produce them to light, or proſecute them with ſeverity, except very needful occaſion urgeth: ſuch as is the glory and ſervice of God, the maintenance of truth, the vindication of innocence, the

Prov. x. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 8. 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

preſervation of public juſtice and peace, the amendment of our neighbour himſelf, or ſecuring others from contagion. Barring ſuch reaſons, (really being, not affectedly pretended,) we are bound not ſo much as to diſcloſe, as to touch our neighbour's faults; much more, not to blaze them about, not to exaggerate them by vehement invectives. SERM. XVI.

4. We ſhould never ſpeak ill of any man beyond meaſure: be the cauſe never ſo juſt, the occaſion never ſo neceſſary, we ſhould yet nowiſe be immoderate therein, exceeding the bounds preſcribed by truth, equity, and humanity. We ſhould never ſpeak worſe of any man whatever than he certainly deſerveth, according to the moſt favourable conſtruction of his doings; never more than the cauſe abſolutely requireth. We ſhould rather be careful to fall ſhort of what in rigorous truth might be ſaid againſt him, than in the leaſt to paſs beyond it. The beſt cauſe had better ſeem to ſuffer a little by our reſervedneſs in its defence, than any man be wronged by our aſperſing him; for God, the patron of truth and right, is ever able to ſecure them without the ſuccour of our unjuſt and uncharitable dealing. The contrary practice hath indeed within it a ſpice of ſlander, that is, of the worſt iniquity.

5. We muſt never ſpeak ill of any man out of bad principles, or for bad ends.

No ſudden or raſh anger ſhould inſtigate us thereto. For, *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all malice,* is the apoſtolical precept: they are all aſſociates and kindred, which are to be caſt away together. Such anger itſelf is culpable, as a work of the fleſh, and therefore to be ſuppreſſed; and all its brood therefore is alſo to be ſmothered: the daughter of ſuch a mother cannot be legitimate. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.* Eph. iv. 31. Col. iii. 8. Jam. i. 20.

We muſt not ſpeak ill out of inveterate hatred or ill-will. For this murderous, this viperous diſpoſition ſhould

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itſelf be rooted out of our hearts: whatever iſſueth from it cannot be otherwiſe than very bad; it muſt be a poiſonous breath that exhaleth from that foul ſource.

We muſt not be provoked thereto by any revengeful diſpoſition, or rancorous ſpleen, in regard to any injuries or diſcourteſies received. For, as we muſt not revenge ourſelves, or render evil in any other way; ſo particularly not in this, which is commonly the ſpecial inſtance expreſsly prohibited. *Render not evil for evil,* ſaith St. Peter, *nor railing for railing; but contrariwiſe bleſs,* or ſpeak well: and, *Bleſs them,* ſaith our Lord, *which curſe you;* *Bleſs,* ſaith St. Paul, *and curſe not.*

1 Pet. iii. 9.
Matt. v. 44.
Rom. xii. 14.
Deut. xxv. 3.

We muſt not alſo do it out of contempt: for we are not to ſlight our brethren in our hearts. No man really (conſidering what he is, whence he came, how he is related, what he is capable of) can be deſpicable. Extreme naughtineſs is indeed contemptible; but the unhappy perſon that is engaged therein is rather to be pitied than deſpiſed. However, charity bindeth us to ſtifle contemptuous motions of heart, and not to vent them in vilifying expreſſion. Particularly, it is a barbarous practice out of contempt to reproach perſons for natural imperfections, for meanneſs of condition, for unlucky diſaſters, for any involuntary defects: this being indeed to reproach mankind, unto which ſuch things are incident; to reproach Providence, from the diſpoſal whereof they do proceed. *Whoſo mocketh the poor deſpiſeth his Maker,* ſaith the Wiſe Man: and the ſame may be ſaid of him that reproachfully mocketh him that is dull in parts, deformed in body, weak in health or ſtrength, or defective in any ſuch way.

He that is void of wiſdom deſpiſeth his neighbour. Prov. xi. 12.
Prov. xvii. 5.

Likewiſe we muſt not ſpeak ill out of envy; becauſe others do excel us in any good quality, or exceed us in fortune. To harbour this baſe and ugly diſpoſition in our minds is unworthy of a man, who ſhould delight in all good ſpringing up anywhere, and befalling any man, naturally allied unto him; it is moſt unworthy of a Chriſtian, who ſhould tender his brother's good as his own,

and *rejoice with thoſe that rejoice.* From thence to be drawn to caſt reproach upon any man is horrible and heinous wickedneſs. SERM. XVI. Rom. xii. 15.

Neither ſhould we ever uſe reproach as a means of compaſſing any deſign we do affect or aim at: it is an unwarrantable engine of raiſing us to wealth, dignity, or repute. To grow by the diminution, to riſe by the depreſſion, to ſhine by the eclipſe of others, to build a fortune upon the ruins of our neighbour's reputation, is that which no honourable mind can affect, no honeſt man will endeavour. Our own wit, courage, and induſtry, managed with God's aſſiſtance and bleſſing, are ſufficient, and only lawful inſtruments of proſecuting honeſt enterpriſes; we need not, we muſt not inſtead of them employ our neighbour's diſgrace: no worldly good is worth purchaſing at ſuch a rate, no project worth achieving by ſuch foul ways.

Neither ſhould we out of malignity, to cheriſh or gratify ill humour, uſe this practice. It is obſervable of ſome perſons, that not out of any formed diſpleaſure, grudge, or particular diſaffection, nor out of any particular deſign, but merely out of a κακοήθεια, an ill diſpoſition, ſpringing up from nature, or contracted by uſe, they are apt to carp at any action, and with ſharp reproach to bite any man that comes in their way, thereby feeding and ſoothing that evil inclination. But as this inhuman and ſurriſh humour ſhould be corrected and extirpated from our hearts, ſo ſhould the iſſues thereof at our mouths be ſtopped: the beſpattering our neighbour's good name ſhould never afford any ſatisfaction or delight unto us.

Nor out of wantonneſs ſhould we ſpeak ill, for our divertiſement or ſport. For our neighbour's reputation is too great and precious a thing to be played with, or offered up to ſport; we are very fooliſh in ſo diſvaluing it, very naughty in ſo miſuſing it. Our wits are very barren, our brains are ill furniſhed with ſtore of knowledge, if we can find no other matter of converſation.

Nor out of negligence and inadvertency ſhould we ſputter out reproachful ſpeech; ſhooting ill words at

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rovers, or not regarding who ſtands in our way. Among all temerities this is one of the moſt noxious, and therefore very culpable.

In fine, we ſhould never ſpeak concerning our neighbour from any other principle than charity, or to any other intent but what is charitable; ſuch as tendeth to his good, or at leaſt is conſiſtent therewith. *Let all your things,* ſaith St. Paul, *be done in charity:* and words are moſt of the *things* we do concerning our neighbour, wherein we may expreſs charity. In all our ſpeeches therefore touching him, we ſhould plainly ſhew that we have a care of his reputation, that we tender his intereſt, that we even deſire his content and repoſe. Even when reaſon and need do ſo require, that we ſhould diſcloſe and reprehend his faults, we may, we ſhould, by the manner and ſcope of our ſpeech, ſignify thus much. Which rule, were it obſerved, if we ſhould never ſpeak ill otherwiſe than out of charity, ſurely moſt ill-ſpeaking would be cut off; moſt, I fear, of our tattling about others, much of our goſſipping would be marred.

1 Cor. xvi. 14.

Indeed, ſo far from bitter or ſour our language ſhould be, that it ought to be ſweet and pleaſant; ſo far from rough and harſh, that it ſhould be courteous and obliging; ſo far from ſignifying wrath, ill-will, contempt, or animoſity, that it ſhould expreſs tender affection, good eſteem, ſincere reſpect toward our brethren; and be apt to produce the like in them toward us: the ſenſe of them ſhould be grateful to the heart; the very ſound and accent of them ſhould be delightful to the ear. *Every one* ſhould *pleaſe his neighbour for his good to edification.* Our *words* ſhould *always be* ἐν χάριτι, *with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt;* they ſhould have the grace of courteſy, they ſhould be ſeaſoned with the ſalt of diſcretion, ſo as to be ſweet and ſavoury to the hearers[p]. Commonly ill language is a certain ſign of inward enmity and ill-will. Good-will is wont to ſhew itſelf in good terms; it clotheth even its

Prov. xv. 26. xvi. 24.

Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. x. 33. Col. iv. 6.

[p] Charitas—cum arguit mitis eſt, cum blanditur ſimplex eſt: pie ſolet ſævire, ſine dolo mulcere; patienter novit iraſci, humiliter indignari. *S. Bern. Ep.* ii.

grief handſomely, and its diſpleaſure carrieth favour in its face; its rigour is civil and gentle, tempered with pity for the faults and errors which it diſliketh, with the deſire of their amendment and recovery whom it reprehendeth. It would inflict no more evil than is neceſſary; it would cure its neighbour's diſeaſe without exaſperating his patience, troubling his modeſty, or impairing his credit. As it always judgeth candidly, ſo it never condemneth extremely. SERM. XVI.

II. But ſo much for the explication of this precept, and the directive part of our diſcourſe. I ſhall now briefly propound ſome inducements to the obſervance thereof.

1. Let us conſider, that nothing more than railing and reviling is oppoſite to the nature, and inconſiſtent with the tenor of our religion [q]; the which, as even a heathen did obſerve of it, *nil niſi juſtum ſuadet, et lene, doth recommend nothing but what is very juſt and mild:* which propoundeth the practices of charity, meekneſs, patience, peaceableneſs, moderation, equity, alacrity or good humour, as its principal laws, and declareth them the chief fruits of the divine Spirit and grace: which chargeth us to curb and compoſe all our paſſions; more particularly to reſtrain and repreſs anger, animoſity, envy, malice, and ſuch like diſpoſitions, as the fruits of carnality and corrupt luſt: which conſequently drieth up all the ſources, or dammeth up the ſluices of bad language. As it doth *above all things* oblige us to bear no ill-will in our hearts, ſo it chargeth us to vent none with our mouths. Ammian. Marcell. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

2. It is therefore often expreſsly condemned and prohibited as evil. It is the property of the wicked, a character of thoſe who *work iniquity,* to *whet their tongues like a ſword, and bend their bows to ſhoot their arrows, even bitter words.* Pſal. lxiv. 3.

[q] Lingua Chriſtum confeſſa non ſit maledica, non turbulenta, non convitiis et litibus perſtrepens audiatur. *Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.*

. Convitiis et maledictis quæſo vos abſtinete; quia neque maledici regnum Dei conſequentur; et lingua quæ Chriſtum confeſſa eſt, incolumis et pura cum ſuo honore ſervanda eſt. *Cypr. Ep.* vii.

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3. No practice hath more ſevere puniſhments denounced to it than this. The railer (and it is indeed a very proper and fit puniſhment for him, he being exceedingly bad company) is to be baniſhed out of all good ſociety; thereto St. Paul adjudgeth him: *I have*, ſaith he, *now written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch an one not to eat.* Ye ſee what company the railer hath in the text, and with what a crew of people he is coupled: but no good company he is allowed otherwhere; every good Chriſtian ſhould avoid him as a blot, and a peſt of converſation: and finally he is ſure to be excluded from the bleſſed ſociety above in heaven[r]; for *neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners ſhall inherit the kingdom of God:* and, *Without* (without the heavenly city) *are dogs*, ſaith St. John in his Revelation, that is, thoſe chiefly who out of curriſh ſpite or malignity do frowardly bark at their neighbours, or cruelly bite them with reproachful language.

1 Cor. v. 11.

1 Cor. vi. 10.

Rev. xxii. 15.

4. If we look upon ſuch language in its own nature, what is it but a ſymptom of a foul, a weak, a diſordered and diſtempered mind? It is the ſmoke of inward rage and malice: it is a ſtream that cannot iſſue from a ſweet ſpring: it is a ſtorm that cannot bluſter out of a calm region. *The words of the pure are pleaſant words*, as the Wiſe Man ſaith.

Prov. xv. 26.

5. This practice doth plainly ſignify low ſpirit, ill breeding, and bad manners; and thence miſbecometh any wiſe, any honeſt, any honourable perſon. It agreeth to children, who are unapt and unaccuſtomed to deal in matters conſiderable, to ſquabble; to women of meaneſt rank, (apt by nature, or cuſtom, to be tranſported with paſſion,) to ſcold. In our modern languages it is termed

[r] Hinc intelligere poſſumus quam gravis ſit et pernicioſa maledictio, quando, etiamſi alia bona adfuerint, ſola excludit a cœlo. *Salv. de Guber. Dei*, lib. iii.

villany, as being proper for ruſtic boors, or men of coarſeſt education and employment; who, having their minds debaſed by being converſant in meaneſt affairs, do vent their ſorry paſſions, and bicker about their petty concernments, in ſuch ſtrains; who alſo, being not capable of a fair reputation, or ſenſible of diſgrace to themſelves, do little value the credit of others, or care for aſperſing it. But ſuch language is unworthy of thoſe perſons, and cannot eaſily be drawn from them, who are wont to exerciſe their thoughts about nobler matters, who are verſed in affairs manageable only by calm deliberation and fair perſuaſion, not by impetuous and provocative rudeneſs; the which do never work otherwiſe upon maſculine ſouls, than ſo as to procure diſdain and reſiſtance. Such perſons, knowing the benefit of a good name, being wont to poſſeſs a good repute, prizing their own credit as a conſiderable good, will never be prone to bereave others of the like by opprobrious ſpeech. A noble enemy will never ſpeak of his enemy in bad terms [s]. SERM. XVI.

We may farther conſider, that all wiſe, all honeſt, all ingenuous perſons have an averſation from ill ſpeaking, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence; that only ill-natured, unworthy, and naughty people are its willing auditors, or do abet it with applauſe. The good man, in the fifteenth Pſalm, *non accipit opprobrium, doth not take up*, or accept, *a reproach againſt his neighbour*: but *A wicked doer*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *giveth heed to falſe lips, and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue*. And what reaſonable man will do that which is diſguſtful to the wiſe and good, is grateful only to the fooliſh and baſer ſort of men [t]? I pretermit, that uſing this ſort of language doth incapacitate a man for to benefit his neighbour, and defeateth his endeavours for his edification, diſparaging a good cauſe, prejudicing the de- Pſal. xv. 3. Prov. xvii. 4.

[s] In quo admirari ſoleo gravitatem et juſtitiam et ſapientiam Cæſaris, qui nunquam niſi honorificentiſſime Pompeium appellat. *Cic. Epiſt.* tom. vi. 6.

[t] It is always taken as an argument of ill-will. Maledicus a malefico non diſtat, niſi occaſione. *Quint.* xii. 9.

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fence of truth, obſtructing the effects of good inſtruction and wholeſome reproof; as we did before remark and declare. Farther,

6. He that uſeth this kind of ſpeech doth, as harm and trouble others, ſo create many great inconveniences and miſchiefs to himſelf thereby. Nothing ſo inflameth the wrath of men, ſo provoketh their enmity, ſo breedeth laſting hatred and ſpite, as do contumelious words. They are often called *ſwords* and *arrows*;[u] and as ſuch they pierce deeply, and cauſe moſt grievous ſmart; which men feeling are enraged, and accordingly will ſtrive to [x]requite them in the like manner, and in all other obvious ways of revenge. Hence ſtrife, clamour and tumult, care, ſuſpicion and fear, danger and trouble, ſorrow and regret, do ſeize on the reviler; and he is ſufficiently puniſhed for this dealing. No man can otherwiſe than live in perpetual fear of reciprocal like uſage from him, whom he is conſcious of having ſo abuſed. Whence, if not juſtice or charity toward others, yet love and pity of ourſelves ſhould perſuade us to forbear it as diſquietful, incommodious, and miſchievous to us.

We ſhould indeed certainly enjoy much love, much concord, much quiet, we ſhould live in great ſafety and ſecurity, we ſhould be exempted from much care and fear, if we would reſtrain ourſelves from abuſing and offending our neighbour in this kind: being conſcious of ſo juſt and innocent demeanour toward him, we ſhould converſe with him in a pleaſant freedom and confidence, not ſuſpecting any bad language or ill uſage from him.

7. Hence with evidently good reaſon is he that uſeth ſuch language called a *fool*: and he that abſtaineth from it is commended as wiſe. *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for ſtrokes. A fool's mouth is his deſtruction, and his lips are the ſnare of his ſoul. He that refraineth his tongue is wiſe. In the tongue of the*

Prov. xviii. 6, 7.

Prov. x. 19.

Prov. xii. 18.

[u] The ſcourge of the tongue, Job v. 21. Prov. xii. 18. There is that ſpeaketh like the piercings of a ſword. Pſal. lvii. 4. lix. 7. lxiv. 3. Pſal. lii. 2. Sharp raſor. Prov. xxx. 14. Knives.

[x] The froward tongue ſhall be cut out. Prov. x. 31.

wife is health. He that keepeth his lips keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his mouth (that is, in evil-ſpeaking, gaping with clamour and vehemency) *ſhall have deſtruction. The words of a wiſe man's mouth are gracious: but the lips of a fool will ſwallow up himſelf. Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it ſhall eat the fruit thereof;* that is, of the one or the other, anſwerably to the kind of ſpeech they chooſe. SERM. XVI. Prov. xiii. 3. Eccleſ. x. 12. Prov. xviii. 21.

In fine, very remarkable is that advice, or reſolution of the grand point concerning the beſt way of living happily, in the Pſalmiſt: *What man is he that deſireth life, and loveth many days, that he may ſee good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from ſpeaking guile.* Abſtinence from ill-ſpeaking he ſeemeth to propoſe as the firſt ſtep toward the fruition of a durably-happy life. Pſal. xxxiv. 12, 13.

8. Laſtly, we may conſider that it is a grievous perverting the deſign of ſpeech, (that excellent faculty, which ſo much diſtinguiſheth us from, ſo highly advanceth us above, other creatures,) to uſe it to the defaming and diſquieting our neighbour. It was given us as an inſtrument of beneficial commerce, and delectable converſation; that with it we might aſſiſt and adviſe, might cheer and comfort one another: we therefore in employing it to the diſgrace, vexation, damage or prejudice in any kind, of our neighbour, do foully abuſe it; and ſo doing, render ourſelves indeed worſe than dumb beaſts: for better far it were that we could ſay nothing, than that we ſhould ſpeak ill [y].

Now the God of grace and *peace make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

[y] Mutos naſci, et egere omni ratione ſatius fuiſſet, quam providentiæ munera in mutuam perniciem convertere. *Quint.* xii. 1.

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. x. 18.

He that uttereth ſlander is a fool.

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GENERAL declamations againſt vice and ſin are indeed excellently uſeful, as rouſing men to conſider and look about them: but they do often want effect, becauſe they only raiſe confuſed apprehenſions of things, and indeterminate propenſions to action; the which uſually, before men throughly perceive or reſolve what they ſhould practiſe, do decay and vaniſh. As he that cries out fire doth ſtir up people, and inſpireth them with a kind of hovering tendency every way, yet no man thence to purpoſe moveth, until he be diſtinctly informed where the miſchief is; then do they, who apprehend themſelves concerned, run haſtily to oppoſe it: ſo, till we particularly diſcern where our offences lie, (till we diſtinctly know the heinous nature and the miſchievous conſequences of them,) we ſcarce will effectually apply ourſelves to correct them. Whence it is requiſite, that men ſhould be particularly acquainted with their ſins, and by proper arguments be diſſuaded from them.

In order whereto I have now ſelected one ſin to deſcribe, and to diſſuade from, being in nature as vile, and in practice as common, as any other whatever that hath prevailed among men. It is ſlander, a ſin which in all

times and places hath been epidemical and rife; but which eſpecially doth ſeem to reign and rage in our age and country.

There are principles innate to men, which ever have, and ever will incline them to this offence. Eager appetites to ſecular and ſenſual goods; violent paſſions, urging the proſecution of what men affect; wrath and diſpleaſure againſt thoſe who ſtand in the way of compaſſing their deſires; emulation and envy toward thoſe who hap to ſucceed better, or to attain a greater ſhare in ſuch things; exceſſive ſelf-love; unaccountable malignity and vanity, are in ſome degrees connatural to all men, and ever prompt them to this dealing, as appearing the moſt efficacious, compendious, and eaſy way of ſatisfying ſuch appetites, of promoting ſuch deſigns, of diſcharging ſuch paſſions. Slander thence hath always been a principal engine, whereby covetous, ambitious, envious, ill-natured, and vain perſons have ſtrove to ſupplant their competitors, and advance themſelves; meaning thereby to procure, what thay chiefly prize and like, wealth, or dignity, or reputation, favour and power in the court, reſpect and intereſt with the people.

But from eſpecial cauſes our age peculiarly doth abound in this practice: for, beſides the common diſpoſitions inclining thereto, there are conceits newly coined, and greedily entertained by many, which ſeem purpoſely levelled at the diſparagement of piety, charity, and juſtice, ſubſtituting intereſt in the room of conſcience, authorizing and commending, for good and wiſe, all ways ſerving to private advantage. There are implacable diſſenſions, fierce animoſities, and bitter zeals ſprung up; there is an extreme curioſity, niceneſs, and delicacy of judgment; there is a mighty affectation of ſeeming wiſe and witty by any means; there is a great unſettlement of mind, and corruption of manners, generally diffuſed over people: from which ſources it is no wonder that this flood hath ſo overflown, that no banks can reſtrain it, no fences are able to reſiſt it; ſo that ordinary converſation is full with it, and no demeanour can be ſecure from it.

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If we do mark what is done in many (might I not ſay, in moſt) companies, what is it, but one telling malicious ſtories of, or faſtening odious characters upon another? What do men commonly pleaſe themſelves in ſo much, as in carping and harſhly cenſuring, in defaming and abuſing their neighbours? Is it not the ſport and divertiſement of many, to caſt dirt in the faces of all they meet with; to beſpatter any man with foul imputations? Doth not in every corner a Momus lurk, from the venom of whoſe ſpiteful or petulant tongue no eminency of rank, dignity of place, or ſacredneſs of office, no innocence or integrity of life, no wiſdom or circumſpection in behaviour, no good nature, or benignity in dealing and carriage, can protect any perſon? Do not men aſſume to themſelves a liberty of telling romances, and framing characters concerning their neighbour, as freely as a poet doth about Hector or Turnus, Therſites or Draucus? Do they not uſurp a power of playing with, of toſſing about, of tearing in pieces their neighbour's good name, as if it were the verieſt toy in the world? Do not many, *having a form of godlineſs*, (ſome of them demurely, others confidently, both without any ſenſe of, or remorſe for what they do,) backbite their brethren? Is it not grown ſo common a thing to aſperſe cauſeleſsly, that no man wonders at it, that few diſlike, that ſcarce any deteſt it? that moſt notorious calumniators are heard, not only with patience, but with pleaſure; yea are even held in vogue and reverence, as men of a notable talent, and very ſerviceable to their party; ſo that ſlander ſeemeth to have loſt its nature, and not to be now an odious ſin, but a faſhionable humour, a way of pleaſing entertainment, a fine knack, or curious feat of policy; ſo that no man at leaſt taketh himſelf or others to be accountable for what is ſaid in this way? Is not, in fine, the caſe become ſuch, that whoever hath in him any love of truth, any ſenſe of juſtice or honeſty, any ſpark of charity toward his brethren, ſhall hardly be able to ſatisfy himſelf in the converſations he meeteth; but will be tempted, with the holy Prophet, to wiſh himſelf ſequeſtered from ſociety,

and caſt into ſolitude; repeating thoſe words of his, *Oh that I had in the wilderneſs a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they are—an aſſembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies?* This he wiſhed in an age ſo reſembling ours, that I fear the deſcription with equal patneſs may ſuit both: *Take ye heed* (ſaid he then; and may we not adviſe the like now?) *every one of his neighbour, and truſt ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly ſupplant, and every neighbour will walk with ſlanders. They will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not ſpeak the truth: they have taught their tongue to ſpeak lies, and weary themſelves to commit iniquity.*

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Jer. ix. 2, 3. vi. 28. Ezek. xxii. 9.

Jer. ix. 4, 5.

Such being the ſtate of things, obvious to experience, no diſcourſe may ſeem more needful or uſeful, than that which ſerveth to correct or check this practice: the which I ſhall endeavour to do, 1. by deſcribing the nature, 2. by declaring the folly of it; or ſhewing it to be very true which the Wiſe Man here aſſerteth, *He that uttereth ſlander is a fool.* The which particulars I hope ſo to proſecute, that any man ſhall be able eaſily to diſcern, and ready heartily to deteſt this practice.

I. For explication of its nature, we may deſcribe ſlander to be the uttering falſe (or equivalent to falſe, morally falſe) ſpeech againſt our neighbour, in prejudice to his fame, his ſafety, his welfare, or concernment in any kind, out of malignity, vanity, raſhneſs, ill-nature, or bad deſign. That which is in holy Scripture forbidden and reproved under ſeveral names and notions; of [a]*bearing falſe witneſs*, [b]*falſe accuſation*, [c]*railing cenſure*, [d]*ſycophantry*, [e]*tale-bearing*, [f]*whiſpering*, [g]*backbiting*, [h]*ſupplanting*, [i]*taking up reproach:* which terms ſome of them do ſignify the nature, others denote the ſpecial kinds, others imply the manners, others ſuggeſt the ends of this practice. But it ſeemeth moſt fully intelligible by obſerving the ſeveral kinds and degrees thereof; as alſo by reflecting on the divers ways and manners of practiſing it.

[a] Exod. xx. 16.
[b] Pſ. xxxv. 11.
[c] Jude 9. 2 Pet. ii. 11.
[d] Luke iii. 14. xix. 8.
[e] Levit. xix. 16. Prov. xviii. 8. xxvi. 20.
[f] Prov. xvi. 28. Rom. i. 29. 2 Cor. xii. 20.
[g] Pſal. xv. 3. Rom. i. 30.
[h] Jer. ix. 4.
[i] Pſal. xv. 3.

The principal kinds thereof I obſerve to be theſe:

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1. The groſſeſt kind of ſlander is that which in the Decalogue is called *bearing falſe teſtimony againſt our neighbour;* that is, flatly charging him with facts the which he never committed, and is nowiſe guilty of. As in the caſe of Naboth, when men were ſuborned to ſay, *Naboth did blaſpheme God and the king:* and as was David's caſe, when he thus complained, *Falſe witneſſes did riſe up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not of.* This kind in the higheſt way (that is, in judicial proceedings) is more rare; and of all men, they who are detected to practiſe it are held moſt vile and infamous; as being plainly the moſt pernicious and perilous inſtruments of injuſtice, the moſt deſperate enemies of all men's right and ſafety that can be. But alſo out of the court there are many knights-errant of the poſt, whoſe buſineſs it is to run about ſcattering falſe reports; ſometimes loudly proclaiming them in open companies, ſometimes cloſely whiſpering them in dark corners; thus infecting converſation with their poiſonous breath: theſe no leſs notoriouſly are guilty of this kind, as bearing always the ſame malice, and ſometimes breeding as ill effects.

1 Kings xxi. 13. Pſal. xxxv. 11.

2. Another kind is, affixing ſcandalous names, injurious epithets, and odious characters upon perſons, which they deſerve not. As when Corah and his complices did accuſe Moſes of being ambitious, unjuſt, and tyrannical: when the Phariſees called our Lord an impoſtor, a blaſphemer, a ſorcerer, a glutton and wine-bibber, an incendiary and perverter of the people, one that *ſpake againſt Cæſar,* and *forbad to give tribute:* when the Apoſtles were charged of being [a] peſtilent, turbulent, factious and ſeditious fellows. This ſort being very common, and thence in ordinary repute not ſo bad, yet in juſt eſtimation may be judged even worſe than the former; as doing to our neighbour more heavy and more irreparable wrong. For it impoſeth on him really more blame, and that ſuch which he can hardly ſhake off: becauſe the charge ſignifieth habit of evil, and includeth many acts; then, being general and indefinite, can ſcarce be diſ-

Num. xvi. 3, 13, 14. John xix. 7, 21. Matt. xxvi. 65. ix. 3. xii. 24. xi. 19. Luke xxiii. 2, 5, 14. John xix. 12. Luke xxiii. 2.

[a] Acts xvii. 6. xxiv. 5.

proved. He, for inſtance, that calleth a ſober man drunkard, doth impute to him many acts of ſuch intemperance; ſome really paſt, others probably future; and no particular time or place being ſpecified, how can a man clear himſelf of that imputation, eſpecially with thoſe who are not throughly acquainted with his converſation? So he that calleth a man unjuſt, proud, perverſe, hypocritical, doth load him with moſt grievous faults, which it is not poſſible that the moſt innocent perſon ſhould diſcharge himſelf from. SERM. XVII.

3. Like to that kind is this, aſperſing a man's actions with harſh cenſures and foul terms, importing that they proceed from ill principles, or tend to bad ends; ſo as it doth not or cannot appear. [a] Thus when we ſay of him that is generouſly hoſpitable, that he is profuſe; of him that is prudently frugal, that he is niggardly; of him that is cheerful and free in his converſation, that he is vain or looſe; of him that is ſerious and reſolute in a good way, that he is ſullen or moroſe; of him that is conſpicuous and briſk in virtuous practice, that it is ambition or oſtentation which acts him; of him that is cloſe and baſhful in the like good way, that it is ſneaking ſtupidity, or want of ſpirit; of him that is reſerved, that it is craft; of him that is open, that it is ſimplicity in him: when we aſcribe a man's liberality and charity to vainglory or popularity; his ſtrictneſs of life and conſtancy in devotion, to ſuperſtition or hypocriſy: when, I ſay, we paſs ſuch cenſures, or impoſe ſuch characters, on the laudable or innocent practice of our neighbours, we are indeed ſlanderers, imitating therein the great calumniator, who thus did ſlander even God himſelf, imputing his prohibition of the fruit unto envy toward men; (*God*, ſaid he, *doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and* Gen. iii. 5.

[a] At nos virtutes ipſas invertimus, atque
Sincerum cupimus vas incruſtare. Probus quis
Nobiſcum vivit? multum eſt demiſſus homo. Illi
Tardo cognomen pinguis damus. &c.
Hor. Serm. i. 3. Vid. *Sidon. Apoll.*

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evil;) who thus did aſcribe the ſteady piety of Job, not to a conſcientious love and fear of God, but to policy and ſelfiſh deſign; *Doth Job fear God for nought?*

Job i. 9. ii. 4.

Whoever indeed pronounceth concerning his neighbour's intentions otherwiſe than as they are evidently expreſſed by words, or ſignified by overt actions, is a ſlanderer; becauſe he pretendeth to know, and dareth to aver, that which he no-ways poſſibly can tell whether it be true; becauſe the heart is exempt from all juriſdiction here, is only ſubject to the government and trial of another world; becauſe no man can judge concerning the truth of ſuch accuſations; becauſe no man can exempt or defend himſelf from them: ſo that apparently ſuch practice doth thwart all courſe of juſtice and equity.

Jer. xxiii. 36.

4. Another kind is, perverting a man's words or actions diſadvantageouſly by affected miſconſtruction. All words are ambiguous, and capable of different ſenſes, (ſome fair, ſome more foul;) all actions have two handles, one that candour and charity will, another that diſingenuity and ſpite may, lay hold on: and in ſuch caſes, to miſapprehend is a calumnious procedure, arguing malignant diſpoſition and miſchievous deſign. Thus when two men did witneſs that our Lord affirmed, he *could demoliſh the temple, and rear it again in three days;* although he did indeed ſpeak words to that purpoſe, meaning them in a figurative ſenſe, diſcernible enough to thoſe who would candidly have minded his drift and way of ſpeaking; yet they who crudely alleged them againſt him are called falſe witneſſes. *At laſt,* ſaith the Goſpel, *came two falſe witneſſes, and ſaid, This fellow ſaid, I am able to deſtroy the temple,* &c. Thus alſo when ſome certified of St. Stephen, as having ſaid, that *Jeſus of Nazareth ſhould deſtroy that place, and change the cuſtoms that Moſes delivered;* although probably he did ſpeak words near to that purpoſe, yet are thoſe men called falſe witneſſes: *And,* ſaith St. Luke, *they ſet up falſe witneſſes, which ſaid, This man ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſphemous words,* &c. Which inſtances plainly do ſhew, if we would avoid the guilt of ſlander, how careful we ſhould be to interpret fairly and

Πᾶν πρᾶγμα ἔχει δύο λαβάς. *Epict.*

Matt. xxvi. 60, 61. John ii. 19.

Pſal. lvi. 5. Every day they wreſt my words. Matt. ubi ſupra.

Acts vi. 13, 14.

favourably the words and the actions of our neighbour. SERM. XVII.

5. Another ſort of this practice is, partial and lame repreſentation of men's diſcourſe, or their practice; ſuppreſſing ſome part of the truth in them, or concealing ſome circumſtances about them, which might ſerve to explain, to excuſe, or to extenuate them. In ſuch a manner eaſily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievouſly calumniate. Thus ſuppoſe that a man ſpeaketh a thing upon ſuppoſition, or with exception, or in way of objection, or merely for diſputation ſake, in order to the diſcuſſion or clearing of truth; he that ſhould report him aſſerting it abſolutely, unlimitedly, poſitively and peremptorily, as his own ſettled judgment, would notoriouſly calumniate. If one ſhould be inveigled by fraud, or driven by violence, or ſlip by chance into a bad place, or bad company; he that ſhould ſo repreſent the groſs of that accident as to breed an opinion of that perſon, that out of pure diſpoſition and deſign he did put himſelf there, doth ſlanderouſly abuſe that innocent perſon. The reporter in ſuch caſes muſt not think to defend himſelf by pretending that he ſpake nothing falſe; for ſuch propoſitions, however true in logic, may juſtly be deemed lies in morality, being uttered with a malicious and deceitful (that is, with a calumnious) mind, being apt to impreſs falſe conceits, and to produce hurtful effects concerning our neighbour. There are ſlanderous truths, as well as ſlanderous falſehoods: when truth is uttered with a deceitful heart, and to a baſe end, it becomes a lie. *He that ſpeaketh truth,* ſaith the Wiſe Man, *ſheweth forth righteouſneſs: but a falſe witneſs deceit.* Deceiving is the proper work of ſlander: and truth abuſed to that end putteth on its nature, and will engage into like guilt[b]. Prov. xii. 17.

6. Another kind of calumny is, by inſtilling ſly ſuggeſtions; which although they do not downrightly aſſert falſehoods, yet they breed ſiniſter opinions in the hearers;

[b] Vid. *Herm. Paſtor.* Where the Paſtor obſerves, that the Devil doth in his temptations interſperſe ſome truths, ſerving to render his deluſions paſſable.

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7. A like kind is that of oblique and covert reflections; when a man doth not directly or expreſsly charge his neighbour with faults, but yet ſo ſpeaketh, that he is underſtood, or reaſonably preſumed to do it. This is a very

[c] Excuſando exprobraret. *Tac. Ann.* i. p. 10.

Καινός τις εὕρηται τρόπος οὗτος τῆς διαβολῆς, τὸ μὴ ψέγοντας, ἀλλ' ἐπαινοῦντας λυμαίνεσθαι τοὺς φίλους. *Polyb.* lib. iv.

cunning and very miſchievous way of ſlandering; for therein the ſculking calumniator keepeth a reſerve for himſelf, and cutteth off from the perſon concerned the means of defence. If he goeth to clear himſelf from the matter of ſuch aſperſions; What need, ſaith this inſidious ſpeaker, of that? muſt I needs mean you? did I name you? why do you then aſſume it to yourſelf? do you not prejudge yourſelf guilty? I did not, but your own conſcience it ſeemeth doth, accuſe you. You are ſo jealous and ſuſpicious, as perſons over-wiſe or guilty uſe to be. So meaneth this ſerpent out of the hedge ſecurely and unavoidably to bite his neighbour; and is in that reſpect more baſe and more hurtful than the moſt flat and poſitive ſlanderer. SERM. XVII.

8. Another kind is that of magnifying and aggravating the faults of others; raiſing any ſmall miſcarriage into a heinous crime, any ſlender defect into an odious vice, and any common infirmity into a ſtrange enormity; turning a ſmall *mote in the eye* of our neighbour into a huge *beam*, a little dimple in his face into a monſtrous wen. This is plainly ſlander, at leaſt in degree, and according to the ſurpluſage whereby the cenſure doth exceed the fault. As, he that, upon the ſcore of a ſmall debt, doth extort a great ſum, is no leſs a thief, in regard to what amounts beyond his due, than if without any pretence he had violently or fraudulently ſeized on it: ſo is he a ſlanderer, that, by heightening faults or imperfections, doth charge his neighbour with greater blame, or loads him with more diſgrace than he deſerves. It is not only ſlander to pick a hole where there is none, but to make that wider which is, ſo that it appeareth more ugly, and cannot ſo eaſily be mended. For charity is wont to extenuate faults, juſtice doth never exaggerate them. As no man is exempt from ſome defects, or can live free from ſome miſdemeanours; ſo by this practice every man may be rendered very odious and infamous. Matt. vii. 3.

9. Another kind of ſlander is, imputing to our neighbour's practice, judgment or profeſſion, evil conſequences (apt to render him odious, or deſpicable) which have no

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dependence on them, or connection with them. There do in every age occur diſorders and miſhaps, ſpringing from various complications of cauſes, working ſome of them in a more open and diſcernible, others in a more ſecret and ſubtile way; (eſpecially from divine judgment and providence checking or chaſtizing ſin:) from ſuch occurrences it is common to ſnatch occaſion and matter of calumny. Thoſe who are diſpoſed this way are ready peremptorily to charge them upon whomever they diſlike or diſſent from, although without any apparent cauſe, or upon moſt frivolous and ſenſeleſs pretences; yea, often, when reaſon ſheweth the quite contrary, and they who are ſo charged are in juſt eſteem of all men the leaſt obnoxious to ſuch accuſations. So uſually the beſt friends of mankind, thoſe who moſt heartily wiſh the peace and proſperity of the world, and moſt earneſtly to their power ſtrive to promote them, have all the diſturbances and diſaſters happening charged on them by thoſe fiery *vixons*, who (in purſuance of their baſe deſigns, or gratification of their wild paſſions) really do themſelves embroil things, and raiſe miſerable combuſtions in the world. So it is, that they who have the conſcience to do miſchief, will have the confidence alſo to diſavow the blame and the iniquity, to lay the burden of it on thoſe who are moſt innocent. Thus, whereas nothing more diſpoſeth men to live orderly and peaceably, nothing more conduceth to the ſettlement and ſafety of the public, nothing ſo much draweth bleſſings down from heaven upon the common-weal, as true Religion; yet nothing hath been more ordinary, than to attribute all the miſcarriages and miſchiefs that happened unto it; even thoſe are laid at its door, which plainly do ariſe from the contempt or neglect of it; being the natural fruits, or the juſt puniſhments of irreligion. King Ahab by *forſaking God's commandments*, and following wicked ſuperſtitions, had *troubled Iſrael*, drawing ſore judgments and calamities thereon; yet had he the heart and the face to charge thoſe events on the great aſſertor of piety, Elias: *Art thou he that troubleth Iſrael?* The Jews by provocation of divine juſtice had ſet themſelves in a fair way to-

1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.

ward deſolation and ruin; this event to come they had the preſumption to lay upon the faith of our Lord's doctrine: *If*, ſaid they, *we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans ſhall come, and take away our place and nation*: whenas, in truth, a compliance with his directions and admonitions had been the only means to prevent thoſe preſaged miſchiefs. And, *Si Tibris aſcenderit in mœnia*, if any public calamity did appear, then *Chriſtianos ad leones*, Chriſtians muſt be charged and perſecuted as the cauſes thereof. To them it was that Julian and other Pagans did impute all the concuſſions, confuſions, and devaſtations falling upon the Roman empire. The [a] ſacking of Rome by the Goths they caſt upon Chriſtianity: for the vindication of it from which reproach St. Auſtin did write thoſe renowned Books *de Civitate Dei*. So liable are the beſt and moſt innocent ſort of men to be calumniouſly accuſed in this manner.

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Joh. xi. 48.

Tertull. Apol.

Another practice (worthily bearing the guilt of ſlander) is, being aiding and acceſſory thereto, by any-wiſe furthering, cheriſhing, abetting it. He that by crafty ſignifications of ill-will doth prompt the ſlanderer to vent his poiſon; he that by a willing audience and attention doth readily ſuck it up, or who greedily ſwalloweth it down by credulous approbation and aſſent; he that pleaſingly reliſheth and ſmacketh at it, or expreſſeth a delightful complacence therein; as he is a partner in the fact, ſo he is a ſharer in the guilt [b]. There are not only ſlanderous throats, but ſlanderous ears alſo; not only wicked inventions, which ingender and brood lies, but wicked aſſents,

τὸ ὑποβολιμαῖον τῆς διαβολῆς. *M. Ant.*

[a] Chriſtianis temporibus detrahunt, et mala, quæ illa civitas pertulit, Chriſto imputant. *De Civ. Dei*, i. 1. iii. 31. They (ſaith that great father) detract from the Chriſtian times, and impute the evils, which that city ſuffered, unto Chriſt.

[b] David, Pſal. cv. 5. Whoſo privily ſlandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: τοῦτον ἐξεδίωκον, him have I driven away, ſay the LXX.

Neque vero illa juſta eſt excuſatio, Referentibus aliis injuriam facere non poſſum. Nemo invito auditori libenter refert. Sagitta in lapidem nunquam figitur; interdum reſiliens percutit dirigentem. Diſcat detractor, dum te videt non libenter audire, non facile detrahere. *Hier. ad Nepot. Ep.* ii.

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which hatch and foſter them. Not only the ſpiteful mother which conceiveth ſuch ſpurious brats, but the midwife that helpeth to bring them forth, the nurſe that feedeth them, the guardian that traineth them up to maturity, and ſetteth them forth to live in the world; as they do really contribute to their ſubſiſtence, ſo deſervedly they partake in the blame due to them, and muſt be reſponſible for the miſchief they do. For indeed were it not for ſuch free entertainers, ſuch nouriſhers, ſuch encouragers of them, ſlanders commonly would die in the womb, or prove ſtill-born, or preſently entering into the cold air would expire, or for want of nouriſhment ſoon would ſtarve. It is ſuch friends and patrons of them who are the cauſes that they are ſo rife; they it is who ſet ill-natured, baſe, and deſigning people upon deviſing, ſearching after, and picking up malicious and idle ſtories. Were it not for ſuch cuſtomers, the trade of calumniating would fall [x]. Many purſue it merely out of ſervility and flattery, to tickle the ears, to ſooth the humour, to gratify the malignant diſpoſition or ill-will of others; who upon the leaſt diſcouragement would give over the practice. If therefore we would exempt ourſelves from all guilt of ſlander, we muſt not only abſtain from venting it, but forbear to [y] regard or countenance it: for *He is* (ſaith the Wiſe Man) *a wicked doer*, who *giveth heed to falſe lips; and a liar*, who *giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* Yea, if we thoroughly would be clear from it, we muſt ſhew an averſation from hearing it, an unwillingneſs to believe it;

Prov. xvii. 4.

[x] Poſidonius relateth of St. Auſtin, that he had upon his table written theſe two verſes;

Quiſquis amat dictis abſentum rodere vitam,
Hanc menſam indignam noverit eſſe ſibi:

(He that loveth by ill ſpeech to gnaw the life of thoſe who are abſent, let him know himſelf unworthy to ſit at this table; or, that this table is unfit for him:) And if any there did uſe detraction, he was offended, and minded them of thoſe verſes, threatening alſo to leave the table, and withdraw to his chamber. *Poſid.* cap. 22.

[y] Οὐ παραδέξῃ ἀκοὴν μακράν, Thou ſhalt not receive (or, take up) a falſe report, ſaith the Law, *Exod.* xxiii. 1.

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an indignation againſt it; ſo either ſtifling it in the birth, or condemning it to death being uttered [z]. This is the ſure way to deſtroy it, and to prevent its miſchief. If we would ſtop our ears, we ſhould ſtop the ſlanderer's mouth; if we would *reſiſt the calumniator, he would fly from us:* if we would reprove him, we ſhould repel him. For, as [a] *the north wind driveth away rain, ſo* (the Wiſe Man telleth us) *doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*

Hedge thy ears with thorns, &c. Ecclus. xxviii. 24. ita legit *Cypr.* Ep. 55.

Theſe are the chief and moſt common kinds of ſlander; and there are ſeveral ways of practiſing them worthy our obſerving, that we may avoid them; namely theſe.

1. The moſt notoriouſly heinous way is, forging and immediately venting ill ſtories. As it is ſaid of Doeg, *Thy tongue deviſeth miſchief*; and of another like companion, *Thou giveſt thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit:* and as our Lord ſaith of the Devil, *When he ſpeaketh a lie, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, he ſpeaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.* This palpably is the ſupreme pitch of calumny, uncapable of any qualification or excuſe: hell cannot go beyond this; the curſed fiend himſelf cannot worſe employ his wit, than in minting wrongful falſehoods.

Pſal. lii. 2. Pſal. l. 19. Joh. viii. 44. (Iſa. xxxii. 7.)

2. Another way is, receiving from others, and venting ſuch ſtories, which they who do it certainly know, or may reaſonably preſume, to be falſe; the becoming huckſters of counterfeit wares, or factors in this vile trade. There is no falſe coiner, who hath not ſome complices and emiſſaries ready to take from his hand, and put off his money: and ſuch ſlanderers at ſecond hand are ſcarce leſs guilty than the firſt authors. He that breweth lies may have more wit and ſkill; but the broacher ſheweth the like malice and wickedneſs. In this there is no great diffe-

[z] Beatus eſt, qui ita ſe contra hoc vitium armavit, ut apud eum detrahere nemo audeat. *Hier. ad Celantiam.*

[a] Prov. xxv. 23. Ἂν μάθωσιν οἱ κακήγοροι ὅτι τῶν διαβαλλομένων μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς αὐτὸς ἀποτρίψομεθα, παύσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ τότε τῆς πονηρᾶς ταύτης συνηθείας, καὶ ἐπιθήσονται τὸ ἁμάρτημα, καὶ ἱκανισόνται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτὸς, ὡς σωτῆρας αὐτῶν γενομένους, καὶ ἐγείρας ἀναπείξουσιν. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. γ'.

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rence between the great Devil, that frameth ſcandalous reports, and the little imps, that run about and diſperſe them.

3. Another way is, when one without competent examination, due weighing, and juſt reaſon, doth admit and ſpread tales prejudicial to his neighbour's welfare; relying for his warrant (as to the truth of them) upon any ſlight or ſlender authority. This is a very common and current practice: men preſume it lawful enough to ſay over whatever they hear; to report any thing, if they can quote an author for it. It is not, ſay they, my invention; I tell it as I heard it: *ſit fides penes authorem;* let him that informed me undergo the blame, if it prove falſe. So do they conceive themſelves excuſable for being the inſtruments of injurious diſgrace and damage to their neighbours. But they greatly miſtake therein: for as this practice commonly doth ariſe from the ſame wicked principles, at leaſt in ſome degree, and produceth altogether the like miſchievous effects, as the wilful deviſing and conveying ſlander: ſo it no leſs thwarteth the rules of duty, and laws of equity; God hath prohibited it, and reaſon doth condemn it. *Thou ſhalt not* (ſaith God in the Law) *go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people:* as a tale-bearer, (as *Rachil*, that is,) as a merchant or trader in ill reports and ſtories concerning our neighbour, to his prejudice. Not only the framing them, but the dealing in them beyond reaſon or neceſſity, is interdicted. And it is part of a good man's character in the fifteenth Pſalm, *Non accipit opprobrium, He taketh not up a reproach againſt his neighbour;* that is, he doth not eaſily entertain it, much leſs doth he effectually propagate it: and in our text, *He*, it is ſaid, *that uttereth ſlander* (not only he that conceiveth it) *is a fool.*

Τί διαπορθμεύεις τὸν λόγον; &c. *Chryſ. in Heb.* xi. 3. Δέον συσκιάζειν καὶ συγκρύπτειν τὰ ἐλαττώματα τῶν πλησίον· σὺ δὲ ἐκπομπεύεις, &c. Ibid.

Levit. xix. 16.

Prov. xviii. 8. xxvi. 22.

Pſal. xv. 3.

And in reaſon, before exact trial and cognizance, to meddle with the fame and intereſt of another, is evidently a practice full of iniquity, ſuch as no man can allow in his own caſe, or brook being uſed toward himſelf, without judging himſelf to be extremely abuſed by ſuch reporters. In all reaſon and equity, (yea in all diſcretion,) before we

yield credence to any report concerning our neighbour, or adventure to relate it, many things are carefully to be weighed and ſcanned. We ſhould concerning our author conſider whether he be not a particular enemy, or diſaffected to him; whether he be not ill-humoured, or a delighter in telling bad ſtories; whether he be not diſhoneſt, or unregardful of juſtice in his dealings and diſcourſe; whether he be not vain, or careleſs of what he ſaith; whether he be not light and credulous, or apt to be impoſed upon by any ſmall appearance; whether at leaſt in the preſent caſe he be not negligent, or too forward and raſh in ſpeaking. We ſhould alſo concerning the matter reported mind, whether it be poſſible or probable; whether ſuitable to the diſpoſition of our neighbour, to his principles, to the conſtant tenor of his practice; whether the action imputed to him be not liable to miſapprehenſion, or his words to miſconſtruction. All reaſon and equity do, I ſay, exact from us, diligently to conſider ſuch things, before we do either embrace ourſelves, or tranſmit unto others, any ſtory concerning our neighbour; leſt unadviſedly we do him irreparable wrong and miſchief. Briefly, we ſhould take his caſe for our own, and conſider whether we ourſelves ſhould be content, that upon like grounds or teſtimonies any man ſhould believe or report diſgraceful things concerning us. If we fail to do thus, we do (vainly, or raſhly, or maliciouſly) conſpire with the ſlanderer to the wrong of our innocent neighbour; and that in the Pſalmiſt (by a parity of reaſon) may be transferred to us, *Thou haſt conſented unto the* liar, *and haſt partaken with the* author of calumny. SERM. XVII. Pſal. l. 18.

4. Of kin to this way is the aſſenting to popular rumours, and thence affirming matters of obloquy to our neighbour. Every one by experience knows how eaſily falſe news do riſe, and how nimbly they ſcatter themſelves; how often they are raiſed from nothing, how ſoon they from ſmall ſparks grow into a great blaze, how eaſily from one thing they are transformed into another: eſpecially news of this kind, which do ſuit and feed the bad humour of the vulgar. 'Tis obvious to any man how

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true is that is of Tacitus, how [b] void of conſideration, of judgment, of equity, the buſy and talking part of mankind is. Whoever therefore gives heed to flying tales, and thruſts himſelf into the herd of thoſe who ſpread them, is either ſtrangely injudicious, or very malignantly diſpoſed. If he want not judgment, he cannot but know, that when he complieth with popular fame, it is mere chance that he doth not ſlander, or rather it is odds that he ſhall do ſo: he conſequently ſheweth himſelf to be indifferent whether he doth it or no, or rather that he doth incline to do it: whence, not caring to be otherwiſe, or loving to be a ſlanderer, he in effect and juſt eſteem is ſuch; having at leaſt a ſlanderous heart and inclination. He that puts it to the venture whether he lieth or no, doth *eo ipſo* lie morally, as declaring no care or love of truth. *Thou ſhalt not* (ſaith the Law) *follow a multitude to do evil:* and with like reaſon we ſhould not follow the multitude in ſpeaking evil of our neighbour.

Exod. xxiii. 2.

5. Another ſlanderous courſe is, to build cenſures and reproaches upon ſlender conjectures, or uncertain ſuſpicions, (thoſe *ὑπόνοιαι πονηραὶ*, *evil ſurmiſes*, which St. Paul condemneth.) Of theſe occaſion can never be wanting to them who ſeek them, or are ready to embrace them; no innocence, no wiſdom can any-wiſe prevent them; and if they may be admitted as grounds of defamation, no man's good name can be ſecure. But he that upon ſuch accounts dareth to aſperſe his neighbour is in moral computation no leſs a ſlanderer, than if he did the like out of pure invention, or without any ground at all: for doubtful and falſe in this caſe differ little; to deviſe, and to divine, in matters of this nature, do import near the ſame. He that will judge or ſpeak ill of others, ought to be well aſſured of what he thinks or ſays: he that aſſerteth that which he doth not know to be true, doth as well lie, as he that

1 Tim. vi. 4. Matt. ix. 4. Ziba. 2 Sam. xvi. 3. xix. 27.

[b] Plebi non judicium, non veritas. *Tac. Ann.* xvi.

Non eſt conſilium in vulgo, non ratio, non diſcrimen, non diligentia—ex opinione plurima, ex veritate pauca judicat. *Cic. pro Planco.*

Ἀνὴρ μὴ πίστις· πολύτροπός ἐστιν ὅμιλος. *Phocyl.*

Prov. xiv. 15. The ſimple believeth every word.

affirmeth that which he knoweth to be falſe; (for he deceiveth the hearers, begetting in them an opinion that he is aſſured of what he affirms:) eſpecially in dealing with the concernments of others, whoſe right and repute juſtice doth oblige us to beware of infringing, charity ſhould diſpoſe us to regard and tender as our own. It is not every poſſibility, every ſeeming, every faint ſhew or glimmering appearance, which ſufficeth to ground bad opinion or reproachful diſcourſe concerning our brother: the matter ſhould be clear, notorious, and palpable, before we admit a diſadvantageous conceit into our head, a diſtaſteful reſentment into our heart, a harſh word into our mouth about him. Men may fancy themſelves ſagacious and ſhrewd, (perſons of deep judgment and fine wit they may be taken for,) when they can dive into others hearts, and ſound their intentions; when through thick miſts or at remote diſtances they can deſcry faults in them; when they collect ill of them by long trains, and ſubtle fetches of diſcourſe: but in truth they do thereby rather bewray in themſelves ſmall love of truth, care of juſtice, or ſenſe of charity, together with little wiſdom and diſcretion: for truth is only ſeen in a clear light; juſtice requireth ſtrict proof: *charity thinketh no evil,* and *believeth all things* for the beſt; wiſdom is not forward to pronounce before full evidence. (*He,* ſaith the Wiſe Man, *that anſwereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and ſhame unto him.*) In fine, they who proceed thus, as it is uſual that they ſpeak falſely, as it is caſual that they ever ſpeak truly, as they affect to ſpeak ill, true or falſe; ſo worthily they are to be reckoned among ſlanderers.

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1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7.

Prov. xviii. 13.

6. Another like way of ſlandering is, impetuous or negligent ſputtering out of words, without minding what truth or conſequence there is in them, how they may touch or hurt our neighbour. To avoid this ſin, we muſt not only be free from intending miſchief, but wary of effecting it; not only careful of not wronging one diſtinct perſon, but of harming any promiſcuouſly; not only abſtinent from aiming directly, but provident not to hit caſually any perſon with obloquy. For as he that diſ-

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chargeth ſhot into a crowd, or ſo as not to look about regarding who may ſtand in the way, is no leſs guilty of doing miſchief, and bound to make ſatisfaction to them he woundeth, than if he had aimed at ſome one perſon: ſo if we fling our bad words at random, which may light unluckily, and defame ſomebody, we become ſlanderers unawares, and before we think on it. This practice hath not ever all the malice of the worſt ſlander, but it worketh often the effects thereof, and therefore doth incur its guilt and its puniſhment; eſpecially it being commonly derived from ill temper, or from bad habit, which we are bound to watch over, to curb, and to correct. The tongue is a ſharp and parlous weapon, which we are bound to keep up in the ſheath, or never to draw forth but adviſedly, and upon juſt occaſion; it muſt ever be wielded with caution and care: to brandiſh it wantonly, to lay about with it blindly and furiouſly, to ſlaſh and ſmite therewith any that happeth to come in our way, doth argue malice or madneſs.

7. It is an ordinary way of proceeding to calumniate, for men, reflecting upon ſome bad diſpoſition in themſelves, (although reſulting from their own particular temper, from their bad principles, or from their ill cuſtom,) to charge it preſently upon others; preſuming others to be like themſelves: like the wicked perſon in the Pſalm,

Pſal. l. 21. *Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf.* This is to ſlander mankind firſt in the groſs; then in retail, as occaſion ſerveth, to aſperſe any man: this is the way of half-witted Machiavelians, and of deſperate reprobates in wickedneſs, who, having proſtituted their conſciences to vice, for their own defence and ſolace, would ſhrowd [d] themſelves from blame under the ſhelter of common pravity and infirmity; accuſing all men of that whereof they know themſelves guilty. But ſurely there can be no greater iniquity than this, that one man ſhould undergo blame for the ill conſcience of another.

[d] Remedium pœnæ ſuæ arbitrantur, ſi nemo ſit ſanctus, ſi omnibus detrahatur, ſi turba ſit pereuntium, &c. *Hier. ad Aſellam*, Ep. xcix.

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Theſe ſeem to be the chief kinds of ſlander, and moſt common ways of practiſing it. In which deſcription the folly thereof doth, I ſuppoſe, ſo clearly ſhine, that no man can look thereon without loathing and deſpiſing it, as not only a very ugly, but a moſt fooliſh practice. No man ſurely can be wiſe, who will ſuffer himſelf to be defiled therewith. But to render its folly more apparent, we ſhall diſplay it; declaring it to be extremely fooliſh upon ſeveral accounts. But the doing this, in regard to your patience, we ſhall forbear at preſent.

SERMON XVIII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. x. 18.

He that uttereth ſlander is a fool.

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II. I ſhall now proceed to declare the folly of it; and to make good by divers reaſons the aſſertion of the Wiſe Man, that *He who uttereth ſlander is a fool.*

1. Slandering is fooliſh, as ſinful and wicked.

All ſin is fooliſh upon many accounts; as proceeding from ignorance, error, inconſiderateneſs, vanity; as implying weak judgment and irrational choice; as thwarting the dictates of reaſon and beſt rules of wiſdom; as producing very miſchievous effects to ourſelves, bereaving us of the chief goods, and expoſing us to the worſt evils. What can be more egregiouſly abſurd, than to diſſent in our opinion and diſcord in our choice from infinite wiſdom; to provoke by our actions ſovereign juſtice and immutable ſeverity; to oppoſe almighty power, and offend immenſe goodneſs; to render ourſelves unlike, and contrary in our doings, our diſpoſition, our ſtate, to abſolute perfection and felicity? What can be more deſperately wild, than to diſoblige our beſt friend, to forfeit his love and favour, to render him our enemy, who is our Lord

and our Judge, upon whoſe mere will and diſpoſal all our ſubſiſtence, all our welfare does abſolutely depend? What greater madneſs can be conceived, than to deprive our minds of all true content here, and to ſeparate our ſouls from eternal bliſs hereafter; to gall our conſciences now with ſore remorſe, and to engage ourſelves for ever in remedileſs miſeries? Such folly doth all ſin include: whence in Scripture ſtyle worthily goodneſs and wiſdom are terms equivalent; ſin and folly do ſignify the ſame thing. SERM. XVIII.

If thence this practice be proved extremely ſinful, it will thence ſufficiently be demonſtrated no leſs fooliſh. And that it is extremely ſinful, may eaſily be ſhewed. It is the character of the ſuperlatively wicked man; *Thou giveſt thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit: thou ſitteſt and ſpeakeſt againſt thy brother; thou ſlandereſt thine own mother's ſon.* It is indeed plainly the blackeſt and moſt helliſh ſin that can be; that which giveth the grand fiend his names, and moſt expreſſeth his nature. He is ὁ Διάβολος, *the ſlanderer; ſatan*, the ſpiteful *adverſary;* the *old ſnake*, or *dragon*, hiſſing out lies, and ſpitting forth venom of calumnious accuſation; *the accuſer of the brethren*, a murderous, envious, malicious calumniator; *the father of lies;* the grand defamer of God to man, of man to God, of one man to another. And highly wicked ſurely muſt that practice be, whereby we grow nameſakes to him, conſpire in proceeding with him, reſemble his diſpoſition and nature. It is a complication, a compriſal, a collection and ſum of all wickedneſs; oppoſite to all the principal virtues, (to veracity and ſincerity, to charity and juſtice,) tranſgreſſing all the great commandments, violating immediately and directly all the duties concerning our neighbour. Pſ. l. 19, 20. Apoc. xii. 10. Joh. viii. 44.

To lie ſimply is a great fault, being a deviation from that good rule which preſcribeth truth in all our words; rendering us unlike and diſagreeable to God, who is *the God of truth;* (who loveth truth, and practiſeth it in all his doings, who abominateth all falſehood;) including a treacherous breach of faith toward mankind; (we being Eph. iv. 25. 1 Pet. ii. 1. Pſ. xxxi. 5. xxv. 10. lxxxvi. 15. lxxxix. 14. cxlvi. 6. Prov. xii. 22. vi. 17.

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all, in order to the maintenance of ſociety, by an implicit compact, obliged by ſpeech to declare our mind, to inform truly, and not to impoſe upon our neighbour;) arguing puſillanimous timorouſneſs and impotency of mind, a diſtruſt in God's help, and diffidence in all good means to compaſs our deſigns; begetting deception and error, a foul and ill-favoured brood: lying, I ſay, is upon ſuch accounts a ſinful and blameable thing: and of all lies thoſe certainly are the worſt, which proceed from malice, or from vanity, or from both, and which work miſchief; ſuch as ſlanders are.

Again, to bear any hatred or ill-will, to exerciſe enmity toward any man, to deſign or procure any miſchief to our neighbour, whom even Jews were commanded to *love as themſelves*, whoſe good, by many laws, and upon divers ſcores, we are obliged to tender as our own, is a heinous fault: and of this apparently the ſlanderer is moſt guilty in the higheſt degree. For evidently true it is which the Wiſe Man affirmeth, *A lying tongue hateth thoſe that are afflicted with it*; there is no ſurer argument of extreme hatred; nothing but the height of ill-will can ſuggeſt this practice. The ſlanderer is an enemy, as the moſt fierce and outrageous, ſo the moſt baſe and unworthy that can be: he fighteth with the moſt perilous and moſt unlawful weapon, in the moſt furious and foul way that can be. His weapon is an envenomed *arrow, full of deadly poiſon*, which *he ſhooteth ſuddenly, and feareth not*; a weapon which by no force can be reſiſted, by no art declined, whoſe impreſſion is altogether inevitable and unſuſtainable. It is a moſt inſidious, moſt treacherous and cowardly way of fighting; wherein manifeſtly the weakeſt and baſeſt ſpirits have extreme advantage, and may eaſily prevail againſt the braveſt and worthieſt: for no man of honour or honeſty can in way of reſiſtance or requital deign to uſe it, but muſt infallibly without repugnance be borne down thereby. By it the vile practiſer achieveth the greateſt miſchief that can be. His words are, as the Pſalmiſt ſaith of Doeg, *devouring words*, (*Thou loveſt all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue:*) and, *A man*,

Levit. xix. 18.

Prov. xxvi. 28.

Jam. iii. 8. Pſal. lxiv. 3, 4. lvii. 4.

Pſal. lii. 4.

ſaith the Wiſe Man, *that beareth falſe witneſs againſt his neighbour is a maul, and a ſword, and a ſharp arrow;* that is, he is a complicated inſtrument of all miſchiefs: he ſmiteth and bruiſeth like a *maul*, he cutteth and pierceth like a *ſword*, he thus doth hurt near at hand; and at diſtance he woundeth like a *ſharp arrow*, it is hard any where to evade him, or to get out of his reach. *Many*, ſaith another wiſe man, the imitator of Solomon, *have fallen by the edge of the ſword: but not ſo many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not paſſed through the venom thereof; who hath not drawn the yoke thereof, nor hath been bound in its bands. For the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of braſs. The death thereof is an evil death, the grave were better than it.* Incurable are the wounds which the ſlanderer inflicteth, irreparable the damages which he cauſeth, indelible the marks which he leaveth. *No balſam can heal the biting of a ſycophant;* no thread can ſtitch up a good name torn by calumnious defamation; no ſoap is able to cleanſe from the ſtains aſperſed by a foul mouth. *Aliquid adhærebit;* ſomewhat always of ſuſpicion and ill opinion will ſtick in the minds of thoſe who have given ear to ſlander. So extremely oppoſite is this practice unto the queen of virtues, *charity*. Its property indeed is, to *believe all things*, that is, all things for the beſt, and to the advantage of our neighbour; not ſo much as to ſuſpect any evil of him, without unavoidably manifeſt cauſe: how much more not to deviſe any falſehood againſt him? It *covereth* all things, ſtudiouſly conniving at real defects, and concealing aſſured miſcarriages: how much more not divulging imaginary or falſe ſcandals? It diſpoſeth to ſeek and further any the leaſt good concerning him: how much more will it hinder committing grievous outrage upon his deareſt good name?

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Prov. xxv. 18. xii. 6. An ungodly man digeth up evil, and in his lips there is a burning fire. Prov. xvi. 27. Eccluſ. xxviii. 18, &c.

Adverſus ſycophantæ morſum nullum eſt remedium.

1 Cor. xiii. 7.

Prov. xvii. 9.

Again, all injuſtice is abominable: to do any ſort of wrong is a heinous crime; that crime, which of all moſt immediately tendeth to the diſſolution of ſociety, and diſturbance of human life; which God therefore doth moſt loathe, and men have reaſon eſpecially to deteſt. And of

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this the ſlanderer is moſt deeply guilty. *A witneſs of Belial ſcorneth judgment, and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity,* ſaith the Wiſe Man. He is indeed, according to juſt eſtimation, guilty of all kinds whatever of injury, breaking all the ſecond table of commands reſpecting our neighbour. Moſt formally and directly he *beareth falſe witneſs againſt his neighbour:* he doth *covet his neighbour's goods;* for 'tis conſtantly out of ſuch an irregular deſire, for his own preſumed advantage, to diſpoſſeſs his neighbour of ſome good, and transfer it on himſelf, that the ſlanderer uttereth his tale: he is ever a thief and robber of his good name, a deflowerer and defiler of his reputation, an [c] aſſaſſin and murderer of his honour. So doth he violate all the rules of juſtice, and perpetrateth all ſorts of wrong againſt his neighbour.

Prov. xix. 28.

He may indeed perhaps conceive it no great matter that he committeth; becauſe he doth not act in ſo boiſterous and bloody a way, but only by words, which are ſubtile, ſlim, and tranſient things; upon his neighbour's credit only, which is no ſubſtantial or viſible matter. He draweth, thinks he, no blood, nor breaketh any bones, nor impreſſeth any remarkable ſcar: 'tis only the ſoft air he breaketh with his tongue, 'tis only a ſlight character that he ſtampeth on the fancy, 'tis only an imaginary ſtain that he daubeth his neighbour with: therefore he ſuppoſeth no great wrong done, and ſeemeth to himſelf innocent, or very excuſable. But theſe conceits ariſe from great inconſiderateneſs, or miſtake; nor can they excuſe the ſlanderer from grievous injuſtice. For in dealing with our neighbour, and meddling with his property, we are not to value things according to our fancy, but according to the price ſet on them by the owner: we muſt not reckon that a trifle, which he prizeth as a jewel. Since then all men (eſpecially men of honour and honeſty) do, from a neceſſary inſtinct of nature, eſtimate their good name beyond any of their goods, yea do commonly hold it more

[c] Dei Epiſcopos linguæ gladio jugulâſtis, fundentes ſanguinem non corporis, ſed honoris. *Op.* lib. ii. Woe be to them who juſtify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteouſneſs of the righteous from him. Iſa. v. 23.

dear and precious than their very lives; we, by violently or fraudulently bereaving them of it, do them no leſs wrong, than if we ſhould rob or cozen them of their ſubſtance, yea than if we ſhould maim their body, or ſpill their blood, or even ſtop their breath. If they as grievouſly feel it, and reſent it as deeply, as they do any other outrage, the injury is really as great to them. Even the ſlanderer's own judgment and conſcience might tell him ſo much: for they who moſt ſlight another's fame, are uſually very tender of their own, and can with no patience endure that others ſhould touch it: which demonſtrates the inconſiderateneſs of their judgment, and the iniquity of their practice. It is an injuſtice not to be corrected or cured. Thefts may be reſtored, wounds may be cured; but there is no reſtitution or cure of a loſt good name: it is therefore an irreparable injury. SERM. XVIII.

Nor is the thing itſelf, in true judgment, contemptible; but in itſelf really very conſiderable. *A good name*, ſaith Solomon himſelf, (no fool,) *is rather to be choſen than great riches; and loving favour rather than ſilver and gold.* In its conſequences it is much more ſo; the chief intereſts of a man, the ſucceſs of his affairs, his ability to do good, (for himſelf, his friends, his neighbour,) his ſafety, the beſt comforts and conveniences of his life, ſometimes his life itſelf, depending thereon: ſo that whoever doth ſnatch or filch it from him, doth not only according to his opinion, and in moral value, but in real effect, commonly rob, ſometimes murder, ever exceedingly wrong his neighbour. It is often the ſole reward of a man's virtue and all the fruit of his induſtry; ſo that by depriving him of that, he is robbed of all his eſtate, and left ſtark naked of all, excepting a good conſcience, which is beyond the reach of the world, and which no malice or misfortune can diveſt him of. Full then of iniquity, full of uncharitableneſs, full of all wickedneſs is this practice; and conſequently full it is of folly. No man, one would think, of any tolerable ſenſe, ſhould dare, or deign to incur the guilt of a practice ſo vile and baſe, ſo indeed diabolical and deteſtable. But farther more particularly,

Prov. xxii. 1. xv. 30. Eccles. vii. 1.

Prov. xii. 6.

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2. The ſlanderer is plainly a fool; becauſe he maketh wrong judgments and valuations of things, and accordingly driveth on ſilly bargains for himſelf, in reſult whereof he proveth a great loſer. He means by his calumnious ſtories either to vent ſome paſſion boiling in him, or to compaſs ſome deſign which he affects, or to pleaſe ſome humour that he is poſſeſſed with: but is any of theſe things worth purchaſing at ſo dear a rate? Can there be any valuable exchange for our honeſty? Is it not more adviſable to ſuppreſs our paſſion, or to let it evaporate otherwiſe, than to diſcharge it in ſo foul a way? Is it not better to let go a petty intereſt, than to further it by committing ſo notorious and heinous a ſin; to let an ambitious project ſink, than to buoy it up by ſuch baſe means? Is it not wiſdom rather to ſmother, or curb our humour, than by ſatisfying it thus to forfeit our innocence? Can any thing in the world be ſo conſiderable, that for its ſake we ſhould defile our ſouls by ſo foul a practice, making ſhipwreck of a good conſcience, abandoning honour and honeſty, incurring all the guilt and all the puniſhment due to ſo enormous a crime? Is it not far more wiſdom, contentedly to ſee our neighbour to enjoy credit and ſucceſs, to flouriſh and thrive in the world, than by ſuch baſe courſes to ſully his reputation, to rifle him of his goods, to ſupplant or croſs him in his affairs? We do really, when we think thus to depreſs him, and to climb up to wealth or credit by the ruins of his honour, but debaſe ourſelves. Whatever comes of it, (whether he ſucceeds, or is diſappointed therein,) aſſuredly he that uſeth ſuch courſes will himſelf be the greateſt loſer and deepeſt ſufferer. 'Tis true which the Wiſe Man ſaith, *The getting of treaſures by a lying tongue, is a vanity toſſed to and fro of them that ſeek death.* And, *Woe unto them,* ſaith the Prophet, *that draw iniquity with cords of vanity;* that is, who by falſehood endeavour to compaſs unjuſt deſigns.

Prov. xxi. 6.

Iſa. v. 18.

But it is not, perhaps he will pretend, for to aſſuage a private paſſion, or to promote his particular concernment, that he makes ſo bold with his neighbour, or deals ſo harſhly with him; but for the ſake of orthodox doctrine,

for advantage of the true church, for the advancement of public good, he judgeth it expedient to aſperſe him. This indeed is the covert of innumerable ſlanders: zeal for ſome opinion, or ſome party, beareth out men of ſectarian and factious ſpirits in ſuch practices; they may do, they may ſay any thing for thoſe fine ends. What is a little truth, what is any man's reputation, in compariſon to the carrying on ſuch brave deſigns? But (to omit that men do uſually prevaricate in theſe caſes; that it is not commonly for love of truth, but of themſelves, not ſo much for the benefit of their ſect, but for their own intereſt, that they calumniate) this plea will nowiſe juſtify ſuch practice. For truth and ſincerity, equity and candour, meekneſs and charity are inviolably to be obſerved, not only toward diſſenters in opinion, but even toward declared enemies of truth itſelf; we are to *bleſs them*, (that is, to ſpeak well of them, and to wiſh well to them,) *not to curſe* them, (that is, not to reproach them, or to wiſh them ill, much leſs to belie them.) Truth alſo, as it cannot ever need, ſo doth it always loathe and ſcorn the patronage and the ſuccour of lies; it is able to ſupport and protect itſelf by fair means; it will not be killed upon a pretence of ſaving it, or thrive by its own ruin. Nor indeed can any party be ſo much ſtrengthened and underpropt, as it will be weakened and undermined, by ſuch courſes: no cauſe can ſtand firm upon a bottom ſo looſe and ſlippery, as falſehood is: all the good a ſlanderer can do is to diſparage what he would maintain. In truth, no hereſy can be worſe than that would be, which ſhould allow to play the devil in any caſe. He that can diſpenſe with himſelf to ſlander a Jew or a Turk, doth in ſo doing render himſelf worſe than either of them by profeſſion are: for even they, and even Pagans themſelves, diſallow the practice of inhumanity and iniquity. All men by light of nature avow truth to be honourable, and faith to be indiſpenſably obſerved. He doth not underſtand what it is to be Chriſtian, or careth not to practiſe according thereto, who can find in his heart, in any caſe, upon any pretence, to calumniate. In fine, to proſtitute our con-

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ſcience, or ſacrifice our honeſty, for any cauſe, to any intereſt whatever, can never be warrantable or wiſe. Farther,

3. The ſlanderer is a fool, becauſe he uſeth improper means and prepoſterous methods of effecting his purpoſes. As there is no deſign worth the carrying on by ways of falſehood and iniquity; ſo is there ſcarce any (no good or lawful one at leaſt) which may not more ſurely, more ſafely, more cleverly be achieved by means of truth and juſtice. Is not always the ſtraight way more ſhort than the oblique and crooked? Is not the plain way more eaſy than the rough and cragged? Is not the fair way more pleaſant and paſſable than the foul? Is it not better to walk in paths that are open and allowed, than in thoſe that are ſhut up and prohibited? than to clamber over walls, to break through fences, to treſpaſs upon in-

Prov. x. 9. cloſures? Surely yes: *He that walketh uprightly walketh ſurely.* Uſing ſtrict veracity and integrity, candour and equity, is the beſt method of accompliſhing good deſigns. Our own induſtry, good uſe of the parts and faculties God hath given us, embracing fair opportunities, God's bleſſing and providence, are ſufficient means to rely upon for procuring, in an honeſt way, whatever is convenient for us. Theſe are ways approved, and amiable to all men; they procure the beſt friends, and feweſt enemies; they afford to the practiſer a cheerful courage, and good hope; they meet with leſs diſappointment, and have no regret or ſhame attending them. He that hath recourſe

Iſa. xxviii. 15, 17. Jer. xxviii. 15. to the other baſe means, and *maketh lies his refuge*, as he renounceth all juſt and honeſt means, as he diſclaimeth all hope in God's aſſiſtance, and forfeiteth all pretence to his bleſſing; ſo he cannot reaſonably expect good ſucceſs, or be ſatisfied in any undertaking. The ſupplanting way indeed ſeems the moſt curt and compendious way of bringing about diſhoneſt or diſhonourable deſigns: but as a good deſign is certainly diſhonoured thereby, ſo is it apt thence to be defeated; it raiſing up enemies and obſtacles, yielding advantages to whoever is diſpoſed to croſs us. As in trade it is notorious, that the beſt courſe to

thrive is by dealing ſquarely and truly; any fraud or cozenage appearing there doth overthrow a man's credit, and drive away cuſtom from him: ſo in all other tranſactions, as he that dealeth juſtly and fairly will have his affairs proceed roundly, and ſhall find men ready to comply with him; ſo he that is obſerved to practiſe falſehood, will be declined by ſome, oppoſed by others, diſliked by all: no man ſcarce willingly will have to do with him; he is commonly forced to ſtand out in buſineſs, as one that plays foul play. SERM. XVIII.

4. Laſtly, The ſlanderer is a very fool, as bringing many great inconveniences, troubles, and miſchiefs on himſelf.

Firſt, *A fool's mouth,* ſaith the Wiſe Man, *is his deſtruction, his lips are the ſnare of his ſoul:* and if any kind of ſpeech is deſtructive and dangerous, then is this certainly moſt of all; for by no means can a man enflame ſo fierce anger, impreſs ſo ſtiff hatred, raiſe ſo deadly enmity againſt himſelf, and conſequently ſo endanger his ſafety, eaſe, and welfare, as by this practice. Men can more eaſily endure, and ſooner will forgive, any ſort of abuſe than this; they will rather pardon a robber of their goods, than a defamer of their good name. Prov. xviii. 7. xiii. 3. xviii. 21.

Secondly, Such an one indeed is not only odious to the perſon immediately concerned, but generally to all men that obſerve his practice, every man preſently will be ſenſible how eaſily it may be his own caſe, how liable he may be to be thus abuſed, in a way againſt which there is no guard or defence. The ſlanderer therefore is apprehended a common enemy, dangerous to all men; and thence rendereth all men averſe from him, and ready to croſs him[d]. Love and peace, tranquillity and ſecurity can only be maintained by innocent and true dealing: ſo the Pſalmiſt hath well taught us; *What man is he that deſireth life, and loveth many days, that he may ſee good?* Pſ. xxxiv. 12, 13.

[d] —— ecquid
Ad te poſt paulo ventura pericula ſentis?
Hor. Lib. i. Ep. 18.
—— ſibi quiſque timet, quanquam eſt intactus et odit. *Idem.*

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Thirdly, All wise, all noble, all ingenuous and honest persons have an aversation from this practice, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence. *A righteous man hateth lying*, saith the Wise Man. It is only ill-natured and ill-nurtured, unworthy and naughty people, that are willing auditors or encouragers thereof. *A wicked doer*, saith the Wise Man again, *giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* All love of truth, and regard to justice, and sense of humanity, all generosity and ingenuity, all charity and good-will to men, must be extinct in those who can with delight, or indeed with patience, lend an ear, or give any countenance to a slanderer: and is not he a very fool, who chooseth to displease the best, only soothing the worst of men?

Prov. xiii. 5.

Prov. xvii. 4.

Fourthly, The slanderer indeed doth banish himself from all conversation and company, or, intruding into it, becomes very disgustful thereto: for he worthily is not only looked upon as an enemy to those whom he slandereth, but to those also upon whom he obtrudeth his calumnious discourse. He not only wrongeth the former by the injury, but he mocketh the latter by the falsehood of his stories; implicitly charging his hearers with weakness and credulity, or with injustice and pravity.

Fifthly, He also derogateth wholly from his own credit, in all matters of discourse. For he that dareth thus to injure his neighbour, who can trust him in any thing he speaks? What will not he say to please his vile humour, or further his base interest? What (thinks any man) will he scruple or boggle at, who hath the heart in thus doing wrong and mischief to imitate the Devil? Farther,

Sixthly, This practice is perpetually haunted with most troublesome companions, inward regret and self-condemnation, fear and disquiet: [c] the conscience of dealing so

[c] Ὁ κακῶς εἰπὼν ἐναγώνιος λοιπόν ἐστιν, ὑποπτεύει τι, καὶ δέδοικε, καὶ μετανοεῖ, ἢ κατεσθίει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γλῶτταν, δεδοικὼς, καὶ τρέμων, μήποτε εἰς ἑτέρους ἐξενεχθὲν

unworthily doth ſmite and rack him; he is ever in danger, and thence in fear to be diſcovered, and requited for it. Of theſe paſſions the manner of his behaviour is a manifeſt indication: for men do ſeldom vent their ſlanderous reports openly and loudly, to the face, or in the ear of thoſe who are concerned in them; but do utter them in a low voice, in dark corners, out of ſight and hearing, where they conceit themſelves at preſent ſafe from being called to an account. *Swords*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt of ſuch perſons, *are in their lips; Who, ſay they, doth hear?* And, *Whoſo privily ſlandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off*, ſaith David again, intimating the common manner of this practice. Calumny is like *the plague, that walketh in darkneſs.* Hence appoſitely are the practiſers thereof termed whiſperers and backbiters: their heart ſuffers them not openly to avow, their conſcience tells them they cannot fairly defend their practice. Again,

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Pſal. lix. 7.

Pſal. ci. 5.

Pſal. xci. 6.

Seventhly, The conſequent of this practice is commonly ſhameful diſgrace, with an obligation to retract, and render ſatisfaction: for ſeldom doth calumny paſs long without being detected and confuted[f]. *He that walketh uprightly walketh ſurely: but he that perverteth his ways ſhall be known:* and, *The lip of truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever; but a lying lip is but for a moment*, ſaith the great obſerver of things[g]. And when the ſlander is diſcloſed, the ſlanderer is obliged to excuſe, (that is, to palliate one lie with another, if he can do it,) or forced to recant, with much diſgrace and extreme diſpleaſure to himſelf: he is alſo many times conſtrained, with his loſs and pain, to repair the miſchief he hath done.

Prov. x. 9.

τὸ ῥῆμα μέγαν ἐπαγάγῃ τὸν κίνδυνον, καὶ περιττὴν ἔχθραν καὶ ἀνόνητον ἐργάσηται τοῖς ἀρκοῦσι, &c. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. γ'.

[f] Pſal. lxiii. 11. The mouth of them that ſpeak lies ſhall be ſtopped.

[g] Prov. xii. 19. (Prov. xxvi. 26.) —— Refrain your tongue from backbiting; for there is no word ſo ſecret that ſhall go for nought: and the mouth that ſlandereth, ſlayeth the ſoul. Wiſd. i. 11.

Et delator habet quod dedit exitium. Vide *Tac. An.* i. p. 45.

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Eighthly, To this in likelihood the concernments of men, and the powers which guard juſtice, will forcibly bring him: and certainly his conſcience will bind him thereto; God will indiſpenſably exact it from him. He can never have any ſound quiet in his mind, he can never expect pardon from Heaven, without acknowledging his fault, repairing the wrong he hath done, reſtoring that good name of which he diſpoſſeſſed his neighbour: for in this no leſs than in other caſes conſcience cannot be ſatisfied, remiſſion will not be granted, except due reſtitution be performed: and of all reſtitutions this ſurely is the moſt difficult, moſt laborious, and moſt troubleſome. It is nowiſe ſo hard to reſtore goods ſtolen or extorted, as to recover a good opinion loſt, to wipe off aſperſions caſt on a man's name, to cure a wounded reputation: the moſt earneſt and diligent endeavour can hardly ever effect this, or ſpread the plaſter ſo far as the ſore hath reached. The ſlanderer therefore doth engage himſelf into great ſtraits, incurring an obligation to repair an almoſt irreparable miſchief.

Ninthly, This practice doth alſo certainly revenge itſelf, impoſing on its actor a perfect retaliation; *a tooth for a tooth;* an irrecoverable infamy to himſelf, for the infamy he cauſeth to others. Who will regard his fame, who will be concerned to excuſe his faults, who ſo outrageouſly abuſeth the reputation of others? He ſuffereth juſtly, he is paid in his own coin, will any man think, who doth hear him reproached [h].

Tenthly, In fine, the ſlanderer (if he doth not by ſerious and ſore repentance retract his practice) doth baniſh himſelf from heaven and happineſs, doth expoſe himſelf

[h] He that diligently ſeeketh good, procureth favour: but he that ſeeketh miſchief, it ſhall come unto him. Prov. xi. 27. xxvi. 27.

It was the puniſhment of ſlanderers in the Law.—Then ſhall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother. Deut. xix. 19.

A falſe witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed; and he that telleth lies ſhall not eſcape. Prov. xix. 5.

God ſhall deſtroy thee for ever, thou falſe tongue. Pſal. lii. 4, 5.

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight. Prov. xii. 22.

to endleſs miſeries and ſorrows. For if none that *maketh a lie ſhall enter into the heavenly city*; if *without* thoſe manſions of joy and bliſs *every one* muſt eternally abide *that loveth or maketh a lie*; if, πᾶσι τοῖς ψευδέσι, *to all liars their portion* is aſſigned *in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone*[i]; then aſſuredly the capital liar, the ſlanderer, (who lieth moſt injuriouſly and miſchievouſly,) ſhall be far excluded from felicity, and thruſt down into the depth of that miſerable place. If, as St. Paul ſaith, no *railer*, or evil-ſpeaker, *ſhall inherit the kingdom of God*; how far thence ſhall they be removed, who without any truth or juſtice do ſpeak ill of and reproach their neighbour? If for every ἀργὸν ῥῆμα, *idle*, or vain, *word* we muſt *render a* ſtrict *account*; how much more ſhall we be ſeverely reckoned with for this ſort of words, ſo empty of truth and void of equity; words that are not only negatively vain, or uſeleſs, but poſitively vain, as falſe, and ſpoken to bad purpoſe? If ſlander perhaps here may evade detection, or ſcape deſerved puniſhment; yet infallibly hereafter, at the dreadful day, it ſhall be diſcloſed, irreverſibly condemned, inevitably perſecuted with condign reward of utter ſhame and ſorrow.

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Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 15.

1 Cor. vi. 10. v. 11.

Matth. xii. 36.

Is not he then, he who, out of malignity, or vanity, to ſerve any deſign, or ſooth any humour in himſelf or others, doth by committing this ſin involve himſelf into all theſe great evils, both here and hereafter, a moſt deſperate and deplorable fool?

Having thus deſcribed the nature of this ſin, and declared the folly thereof, we need, I ſuppoſe, to ſay no more for diſſuading it; eſpecially to perſons of a generous and honeſt mind, who cannot but ſcorn to debaſe and defile themſelves by ſo mean and vile a practice; or to thoſe who ſeriouſly do profeſs Chriſtianity, that is, the religion which peculiarly above all others preſcribeth conſtant truth, ſtricteſt juſtice, and higheſt charity.

I ſhall only add, that ſince our faculty of ſpeech (wherein we do excel all other creatures) was given us, as in the

[i] Rev. xxi. 8. It is one of thoſe things which God eſpecially doth abominate. Prov. vi. 19. xii. 22. A falſe witneſs ſhall periſh. Prov. xxi. 28.

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firſt place to praiſe and glorify our Maker, ſo in the next to benefit and help our neighbour; as an inſtrument of mutual ſuccour and delectation, of friendly commerce and pleaſant converſe together; for inſtructing and adviſing, comforting and cheering one another; it is an unnatural perverting, and an irrational abuſe thereof, to employ it to the damage, diſgrace, vexation, or wrong in any kind of our brother. Better indeed had we been as brutes without its uſe, than we are, if ſo worſe than brutiſhly we abuſe it.

Finally, All theſe things being conſidered, we may, I think, reaſonably conclude it moſt evidently true, that *he which uttereth ſlander is a fool.*

SERMON XIX.

AGAINST DETRACTION.

JAMES iv. 11.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren.

ONE half of our religion conſiſteth in charity toward our neighbour; and of that charity much the greater part ſeemeth exerciſed in ſpeech; for as ſpeaking doth take up the greateſt part of our life, (our quick and active mind continually venting its thoughts, and diſcharging its paſſions thereby; all our converſation and commerce paſſing through it, having a large influence upon all our practice,) ſo ſpeech commonly having our neighbour and his concernments for its objects, it is neceſſary, that either moſt of our charity will be employed therein, or that by it we ſhall moſt offend againſt that great duty, together with its aſſociates, juſtice and peace. SERM. XIX.

Μὴ καταλαλεῖτε ἀλλήλων, ἀδελφοί.

And all offences of this kind (which tranſgreſs charity, violate juſtice, or infringe peace) may perhaps be forbidden in this apoſtolical precept; for the word καταλαλεῖν, according to its origination, and according to ſome uſe, doth ſignify all kind of obloquy, and ſo may compriſe ſlander, harſh cenſure, reviling, ſcoffing, and the like kinds of ſpeaking againſt our neighbour; but in ſtricter acceptation, and according to peculiar uſe, it denoteth that particular ſort of obloquy, which is called *detraction*, or *backbiting*: ſo therefore we may be allowed to underſtand

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it here; and accordingly I now mean to deſcribe it, and to diſſuade from its practice.

There is between this and the other chief ſorts of obloquy (ſlander, cenſuring and reviling) much affinity, yet there is ſome difference; for ſlander involveth an imputation of falſehood; reviling includeth bitter and foul language; but detraction may be couched in truth, and clothed in fair language; it is a poiſon often infuſed in ſweet liquor, and miniſtered in a golden cup. It is of nearer kin to cenſuring, and accordingly St. James here coupleth it thereto: *He that detracteth from a brother, and he that cenſureth his brother, backbiteth the law, and cenſureth the law:* yet may theſe two be diſtinguiſhed; for cenſuring ſeemeth to be of more general purport, extending indifferently to all kinds of perſons, qualities, and actions, which it unduly taxeth; but detraction eſpecially reſpecteth worthy perſons, good qualities, and laudable actions, the reputation of which it aimeth to deſtroy, or to impair.

This ſort of ill practice, ſo rife in uſe, ſo baſe in its nature, ſo miſchievous in its effects, it ſhall be my endeavour to deſcribe, that we may know it; and to diſſuade, that we may ſhun it.

It is the fault (oppoſite to that part of charity and goodneſs, which is called ingenuity or candour) which, out of naughty diſpoſition or deſign, ſtriveth to diſgrace worthy perſons, or to diſparage good actions, looking for blemiſhes and defects in them, uſing care and artifice to pervert or miſrepreſent things to that purpoſe.

An honeſt and charitable mind diſpoſeth us, when we ſee any man endued with good qualities, and purſuing a tenor of good practice, to eſteem ſuch a perſon, to commend him, to interpret what he doeth to the beſt, not to ſuſpect any ill of him, or to ſeek any exception againſt him; it inclineth us, when we ſee any action materially good, to yield it ſimply due approbation and praiſe, without ſearching for, or ſurmiſing any defect in the cauſe or principle, whence it cometh, in the deſign or end to which it tendeth, in the way or manner of performing it. A

good man would be sorry to have any good thing spoiled; as to find a crack in a fair building, a flaw in a fine jewel, a canker in a goodly flower, is grievous to any indifferent man; so would it be displeasing to him to observe defects in a worthy person, or commendable action; he therefore will not easily entertain a suspicion of any such, he never will hunt for any. But, on the contrary, it is the property of a detractor, when he seeth a worthy person, whom he doth not affect, or whom he is concerned to wrong, to survey him throughly, and to sift all his actions, with intent to descry some failing, or any semblance of a fault, by which he may disparage him; when he vieweth any good action, he peereth into it, labouring to espy some pretence to derogate from the commendation apparently belonging to it. This in general is the nature of this fault. But we may get a fuller understanding of it, by considering more distinctly some particular acts, wherein it is commonly exercised, or the several paths in which the detracting spirit treadeth; such are these following.

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1. A detractor is wont to represent persons and actions under the most disadvantageous circumstances he can, setting out those which may cause them to appear odious or despicable, slipping over those which may commend or excuse them. There is no person so excellent, who is not by his circumstances forced to omit some things, which would become him to do, if he were able; to perform some things lamely, and otherwise than he would do, if he could reach it; no action so worthy, but may have some defect in matter, or manner, incapable of redress; and he that representeth such person or action, leaving out those excusing circumstances, doth tend to beget a bad or mean opinion of them, robbing them of their due value and commendation: thus to charge a man of not having done a good work, when he had not the power or opportunity to perform it, or is by cross accidents hindered from doing it according to his desire; to suggest the action was not done exactly, in the best season, in the rightest mode, in the most proper place, with expressions,

Πολὺ τὸ οὐχ ὑπακοῦον, οὐδὲ δεξάμενον τὸ εὖ. *Theoph.*

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looks, or geſtures moſt convenient, theſe are tricks of a detractor; who when he cannot deny the metal to be good, and the ſtamp true, he clippeth it, and ſo would reject it from being current.

2. He is wont to miſconſtrue ambiguous words, or to miſinterpret doubtful appearances of things: let a man ſpeak never ſo well, or act never ſo fairly, yet a detractor will ſay his words may bear this ill ſenſe, his actions may tend to that bad purpoſe; we may therefore ſuſpect his meaning, and cannot yield him a full approbation.

3. He is wont to miſname the qualities of perſons or things, aſſigning bad appellations or epithets to good or indifferent qualities: the names of virtue and vice do ſo nearly border in ſignification, that it is eaſy to transfer them from one to another, and to give the beſt quality a bad name[a]. Thus by calling a ſober man ſour, a cheerful man vain, a conſcientious man moroſe, a devout man ſuperſtitious, a free man prodigal, a frugal man ſordid, an open man ſimple, a reſerved man crafty, one that ſtandeth upon his honour and honeſty proud, a kind man ambitiouſly popular, a modeſt man ſullen, timorous, or ſtupid, is a very eaſy way to detract, and no man thereby can ſcape being diſparaged.

4. He doth imperfectly characterize perſons, ſo as ſtudiouſly to veil or faintly to diſcloſe their virtues and good qualities, but carefully to expoſe, and fully to aggravate or amplify any defects or failings in them. The detractor will pretend to give a character of his neighbour, but in ſo doing he ſtifleth what may commend him, and blazoneth what may diſgrace him; like an envious painter he hideth, or in duſky colours ſhadoweth, all the graceful parts and goodly features, but ſetteth out all blemiſhes in the briſkeſt light, and moſt open view. Every face hath in it ſome mole, ſpot, or wrinkle; there is no man that

[a] At nos virtutes ipſas invertimus, atque
Sincerum cupimus vas incruſtare. Probus quis
Nobiſcum vivit? multum eſt demiſſus homo. Illi
Tardo cognomen pinguis damus. &c.
Hor. Serm. i. 3.

hath not, as they ſpeak, ſome blind place, ſome bleSERM. XIX. miſſies in his nature or temper, ſome faults contracted by education or cuſtom, ſomewhat amiſs proceeding from ignorance, or miſapprehenſion of things: theſe (although they be in themſelves ſmall and inconſiderable, although they are ſome of them involuntary, and thence inculpable, although they be much corrected or reſtrained by virtuous diſcipline, although they are compenſated by greater virtues, yet theſe) the detractor ſnatcheth, moulds eth, and out of them frameth an idea of his neighbour, apt to breed hatred or contempt of him in an unwary ſpectator; whereas were charity, were equity, were humanity to draw the perſon, it, repreſenting his qualities with juſt advantage, would render him lovely and venerable.

5. He is wont not to commend or allow any thing abſolutely and clearly, but always interpoſing ſome exception, to which he would have it ſeem liable: the man indeed, ſaith he, doth ſeem to have this or that laudable quality; the action hath a fair appearance, but then if he can, he blurteth out ſome ſpiteful objection; if he can find nothing colourable to ſay againſt it, yet he will ſeem to know and to ſuppreſs ſomewhat; but, ſaith he, I know what I know, I know more than I'll ſay;—ſo (adding perhaps a crafty nod or ſhrug, a malicious ſneer or ſmile) he thinks to blaſt the faireſt performance [b].

6. He is ready to ſuggeſt ill cauſes and principles, latent in the heart, of practices apparently good; aſcribing what is well done to bad diſpoſition, or bad purpoſe: ſo to ſay of a liberal man, that he is ſo from an ambitious temper, or out of a vain-glorious deſign; of a religious man, that his conſtant exerciſes of devotion proceed not from a conſcientious love and fear of God, or out of intention to pleaſe God and work out his ſalvation; but from hypocriſy, from affectation to gain the favour and

[b] Non audes repetere, qui tacendo amplius criminaris: et quia non habes quod objicias, fimulas verecundiam; ut lector te putet mihi parcere, qui mentiens nec tuæ animæ pepercisti. *Hier. in Ruff.* iii. 6.

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good opinion of men, from deſign to promote worldly intereſts; this is the way of detraction. He doeth well, ſaith the detractor, it cannot be denied; but for what reaſon doeth he ſo? Is it not plainly his intereſt to do ſo? Doth he not mean to get applauſe or preferment thereby? *Doth Job ſerve God for nought?* So ſaid the father of detracting ſpirits.

7. He derogateth from good actions by pretending to correct them, or to ſhew better that might have been done in their room: it is, ſaith he, done in ſome reſpect well, or tolerably; but it might have been done better, with as ſmall trouble and coſt; he was overſeen in chooſing this way, or proceeding in this manner. Thus did Judas blame the good woman, who anointed our Lord's
John xii. 5. feet; *Why*, ſaid he, *was not this ointment ſold, and given to the poor?* So did his covetous baſeneſs prompt him to detract from that performance, of which our Saviour's
Matt. xxvi. 10, 13. goodneſs did pronounce, that it was a *good work*, which ſhould perpetually *through the whole world* paſs for *memorable*.

8. A detractor not regarding the general courſe and conſtant tenor of a man's converſation, which is conſpicuouſly and clearly good, will attack ſome part of it, the goodneſs whereof is leſs diſcernible, or more ſubject to conteſt and blame; as if in a body admirably handſome, one overlooking that curious harmony, that delicate complexion, thoſe fine lineaments and goodly features, which, running through the whole, do conſpire to render it a lovely ſpectacle, ſhould pitch on an eye or a noſe to carp at; or as if in a town, otherwhere begirt with impregnable defences, one ſhould ſearch for the weakeſt place, to form a battery againſt it.

9. In fine, the detractor injecteth ſuggeſtions of every thing anywiſe plauſible or poſſible, that can ſerve to diminiſh the worth of a perſon, or value of an action, which he would diſcountenance; he pryeth into every nook, he bolteth every circumſtance, he improveth every pretence, he allegeth any report or rumour, he uſeth all the tricks imaginable to that end. Such is the nature and way of

detraction; in enlarging upon which I am the more ſparing, becauſe the arts and methods of detraction being in great part common with thoſe of ſlander and cenſure, I have otherwhile in treating upon thoſe offences more fully declared them. SERM. XIX.

Now for diſſuading from its practice, I ſhall propound to your conſideration the cauſes whence it proceedeth, the irregularities and pravities which it involveth, the effects which it produceth; the which will appear ſo baſe and ugly, that whoever ſhall conſider them cannot, I ſuppoſe, but loathe the daughter of ſuch parents, the ſubject of ſuch qualities, and the mother of ſuch children.

I. The cauſes of detraction are,

1. Ill nature, and bad humour: as good nature and ingenuous diſpoſition incline men to obſerve, like, and commend what appeareth beſt in our neighbour; ſo malignity of temper and heart prompteth to eſpy and catch at the worſt: one, as a bee, gathereth honey out of any herb; the other, as a ſpider, ſucketh poiſon out of the ſweeteſt flower.

2. Pride, ambition, and inordinate ſelf-love: the detractor would engroſs praiſe, and derive all glory to himſelf; he would be the chief, the only excellent perſon; therefore he would juſtle another's worth out of the way, that it may not endanger ſtanding in competition with his, or leſſening it by a partnerſhip; that it may not outſhine his reputation, or dim it by the luſtre thereof.

Expedit vobis nemi-nem videri bonum, quaſi aliena virtus exprobratio veſtrorum delictorum fit. *Sen. de Vit. B.* xix.

3. Envy: a detractor liketh not to ſee another thrive, and flouriſh in the good eſteem of men, therefore he would gladly blaſt his worth and virtue; his *eye* is *evil* and ſore, therefore would he quench, or cloud the light that dazzleth it.

4. Malicious revenge and ſpite: his neighbour's good practice condemneth his bad life; his neighbour's worth diſparageth his unworthineſs; this he conceiveth highly prejudicial to him; hence in revenge he will labour to vilify the worth and good works of his neighbour.

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5. Senſe of weakneſs, want of courage, or deſpondency of his own ability: he that in any kind deemeth himſelf able, or confideth in his own ſtrength and induſtry, will allow to others the commendation beſeeming their ability; for he thinking himſelf in capacity to deſerve the ſame, and as he would not loſe the fruits of his own deſerts, ſo he taketh it for equitable that another ſhould enjoy them; to deprive another of them he ſeeth were in conſequence to prejudice his own capacity and hope: but he that feeleth himſelf deſtitute of worth, and deſpaireth to arrive to the credit of others, is thence tempted to diſparage and defame ſuch perſons: this courſe he taketh as the beſt allay of his contemptibleneſs, the only ſolace for his defects that he can hope for; being he cannot ariſe to another's pitch, he would bring down that other to his; he cannot directly get any praiſe, therefore he would indirectly find excuſe, by ſhrouding his unworthineſs under the blame of others. Hence detraction is a ſign of the weakeſt and baſeſt ſpirit; it is an impotent and grovling ſerpent, that lurketh in the hedge, waiting opportunity to bite the heel of any nobler creature that paſſeth by.

οἱ ἰδιῶται ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν μὴ δυνάμενοι φαίνεσθαι, ἐν τῷ ψέγειν τοὺς ἑαυτῶν περίττωσιν δίκαιον βούλονται. *Socr. Hiſt. Eccl.* vi. 13.

Remedium pœnæ ſuæ arbitrantur, ſi nemo ſit ſanctus, ſi omnibus detrahatur, ſi turba ſit pereuntium, ſi multitudo peccantium. *Hier. ad Aſſellam.* Ep. 99.

6. Evil conſcience: a man that is conſcious to himſelf of a ſolid worth and virtue, of having honeſt intentions, of having performed good deeds, is ſatisfied with the fruits of inward comfort and outward approbation, which they do yield; he therefore will ſcorn to ſeek the bettering himſelf by the diſcredit of others; he will not by ſo mean a practice adulterate that worth, in which he feeleth ſufficient complacence; he rather doth like that others ſhould enjoy their due commendation, as juſtifying his own claim thereto; he willingly payeth it, becauſe he may juſtly demand it; and becauſe withholding it from another may prejudice his own right thereto: but he that is ſenſible of no good qualities in himſelf, that is conſcious of no worthy actions that he hath done, to breed a ſatisfaction of mind, or build a reputation upon, would pleaſe himſelf in making others as little better than himſelf as

he can, would ground a kind of credit upon the ruins and rubbiſh of another's fame. When he knoweth he cannot ſhine by his own light, he would ſeem leſs obſcure by eclipſing the brightneſs of others, and ſhutting out the day from about him; conceiving that all things look alike in the dark, and that bad appeareth not bad where no good is near. SERM. XIX.

As alſo a good man liketh worth and virtue, becauſe they reſemble what he diſcerneth in himſelf; ſo evil men hate them, becauſe they do not find themſelves maſters of them; they are like the fox, who ſaid the grapes were ſour, becauſe he could not reach them; and that the hare was dry meat, becauſe he could not catch her. A detractor therefore is always a bad man, and wanteth thoſe good qualities which he would diſparage.

7. Bad, ſelfiſh deſign: detraction is a common engine, whereby naughty men ſtrive to compaſs their ends; when by fair means, by their own wit, induſtry, courage, worthy behaviour, they cannot promote their intereſts, they cannot drive on their ambitious or covetous projects, they cannot attain that preferment or that gain which they affect, then they betake themſelves to this crooked and foul way of ſupplanting, by detracting thoſe whom they conceit to ſtand in the way of their deſigns. It was the firſt piece of wicked policy that ever was practiſed in the world; the Devil, by detracting from the goodneſs and veracity of God, (miſrepreſenting his intentions, and miſconſtruing his commands,) ſtrove to achieve his miſchievous deſign of ſeducing our forefathers; and in his footſteps his ſerpentine progeny (the race of malicious, envious, ambitious, covetous, and crafty politicians) do tread. It is obſerved to be a fault that uſually haunteth courts, wherein there is competition for the favour of a prince, and the conſequences thereof, (for dignity, power, wealth, repute,) to get which to themſelves they ſtrive to diſpoſſeſs or prevent others by this inſtrument of detraction. It is alſo rife among ſcholars, that is, among competitors for wit, learning, induſtry, and the rewards

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of them, reputation or preferment. From ſuch principles and cauſes uſually doth this practice ſpring.

II. It doth involve theſe kinds of irregularity and pravity.

1. Injuſtice: a detractor careth not how he dealeth with his neighbour, what wrong he doeth him. Juſtice obligeth to render every man his due; *honour to whom honour is due*, and praiſe to him that deſerveth praiſe. There can be no greater injury done a man, than to ſpoil his beſt good, his virtue; than to rob him of the beſt reward of his pains and cares, which is a fair reputation; (I ſpeak of rewards which lie in the reach of men.) No man prizes any thing comparably to his honeſty and honour; who therefore by any means blurreth them, is moſt injurious. *Wo unto them—who take the righteouſneſs of the righteous from him.* Iſa. v. 23.

Prov. xvii. 15.

Injurious indeed he is not only to the virtuous perſon, but to virtue itſelf; for commendation is a debt we owe to it, wherever it is found; which conduceth to its encouragement and advancement; and to wrong goodneſs itſelf is the moſt heinous injuſtice.

2. Uncharitableneſs: it is evident that the detractor doth not love his neighbour; for charity maketh the beſt of every thing: *Charity believeth every thing, hopeth every thing* to the advantage of its object; charity delighteth to ſee the beloved to proſper and flouriſh; and will therefore contribute its endeavour to the procuring it to do ſo: the detractor therefore (who would defile the beſt, and diſplay the worſt in his neighbour) can have no charity; he indeed manifeſteth the greateſt hatred, ſeeing he ſtriveth to do the greateſt miſchief, to cauſe the greateſt vexation to his neighbour, in bereaving him of his moſt precious and dear enjoyments.

1 Cor. xiii.

3. Impiety: he that loveth and reverenceth God, will acknowledge and approve his goodneſs, in beſtowing excellent gifts and graces to his brethren; when ſuch appear, he will be afraid to diſavow or diſgrace them, that he may not rob God himſelf of the glory thence due to

his favour and mercy, or through his neighbour's ſide wound the divine benignity: he will be ready to bleſs and praiſe God for all ſuch emanations of his goodneſs; as thoſe did in the Goſpel, who, beholding our Saviour's miraculous works of grace, did *glorify God, who had given ſuch gifts unto men:* but the detractor careth not for that; he feareth not to bereave God of the honour of diſpenſing good gifts, that his brother may not have the honour of receiving them; he will rather deny God to be good, than allow a man to be ſo by his grace and bleſſing: ſo is he no leſs a detractor from God, than from his neighbour. SERM. XIX.

Hence, of all offences, detraction certainly muſt be moſt odious to God. He is the God of truth, and therefore deteſteth lying, of which detraction ever, eſpecially in moral eſteem, hath a ſpice: he is the God of juſtice, and therefore eſpecially doth abhor wronging the beſt perſons and actions: he is the God of love, and therefore cannot but loathe this capital violation of charity: he is jealous of his glory, and cannot therefore endure it to be abuſed by ſlurring his good gifts and graces; he cannot but hate that offence, which approacheth to that moſt heinous and unpardonable ſin, that conſiſteth in defaming the excellent works performed by divine power and goodneſs, aſcribing them to bad cauſes. Matth. xii.

4. Detraction involveth degenerous baſeneſs, meanneſs of ſpirit, and want of good manners. All men affect to ſeem generous, and will ſay they ſcorn to be baſe; but generoſity is in nothing more ſeen, than in a candid eſtimation of other men's virtues and good qualities: to this generoſity of nature, generoſity of education, generoſity of principles and judgment, do all conſpiringly diſpoſe: it is the nobleſt kind of courteſy, to tender and further the reputation of others; to be liberal in beſtowing commendation on deſerving perſons; it obligeth men more than any other benefit can do, procuring them commonly real advantage, always cheering and ſatisfying their mind; for in nothing more do they pleaſe themſelves, than in reaping this fruit of their good intention and honeſt induſtry,

SERM. XIX. the approbation of worthy men; it is therefore a moſt gentile thing thus to oblige men. But, on the other ſide, nothing more plainly argueth a degenerate and ignoble heart, ill-breeding and ill-formed manners, a ſorry mind and poor judgment, than to diſeſteem or diſparage worth and virtue in others: it is the moſt ſavage rudeneſs, the moſt ſordid illiberality, the moſt ugly clowniſhneſs that can be; of all men therefore it moſt doth miſbecome thoſe who pretend to be gentlemen.

5. In conſequence to theſe things, detraction includeth folly; for every unjuſt, every uncharitable, every impious, every baſe perſon is, as ſuch, a fool: none of thoſe qualities are conſiſtent with wiſdom; but the folly of it will particularly appear, together with its pravity, by the bad and hurtful effects which it produceth, both in regard to others, and to him that practiſeth it; ſome of which are theſe:

III. 1. The practice thereof is a great diſcouragement and obſtruction to the common practice of goodneſs: for many, ſeeing the beſt men thus diſparaged, and the beſt actions vilified, are diſheartened and deterred from practiſing virtue, eſpecially in a conſpicuous and eminent degree. Why, will many a man ſay, ſhall I be ſtrictly good, ſeeing goodneſs is ſo liable to be miſuſed, ſeeing thereby I ſhall provoke the detracting tongue, ſeeing my reward ſhall be to have a ſevere inquiſition paſs upon me, to have my life defaced, and my name beſpattered? Had not I better be contented with a mediocrity and obſcurity of goodneſs, than by a glaring luſtre thereof to draw the envious eye, and kindle raging obloquy upon me? Thus men of a weaker ſpirit, or a baſhful temper (who are not ſtiff and reſolute in their way, who have not the heart or the face to bear up againſt rude aſſaults of their reputation) will be ſcared and daunted by detraction; ſo as conſequently to be induced,

Hor. ——— placare invidiam virtute relicta.

And when thus the credit of virtue is blaſted in its practiſers, many will be diverted from it; ſo will it grow out

of requeſt, and the world will be corrupted by theſe agents of the *evil one*. SERM. XIX.

It were indeed, upon this conſideration, adviſable and juſt, not to ſeem ever to detract; even not then when we are well aſſured that by ſpeaking ill we ſhall not really do it; if we ſhould diſcover any man to ſeem worthy, or to be ſo reputed, whom yet we diſcern, by ſtanding in a nearer light, not to be truly ſuch, having had opportunity to know his bad qualities, bad purpoſes, or bad deeds; yet wiſdom would commonly dictate, and goodneſs diſpoſe not to mar his repute. If we ſhould obſerve, without danger of miſtake, any plauſible action to be performed out of bad inclinations, principles, or deſigns; yet ordinarily in diſcretion and honeſty we ſhould let it paſs with ſuch commendation as its appearance may procure, rather than to ſlur it by venting our diſadvantageous apprehenſions about it: for it is no great harm that any man ſhould enjoy undeſerved commendation, or that a counterfeit worth ſhould find a diſſembled reſpect; it is but being over-juſt, which if it be ever a fault, can hardly be ſo in this caſe, wherein we do not expend any coſt, or ſuffer any damage: but it may do miſchief to blemiſh an appearance of virtue; it may be a wrong thereto to deface its very image; the very diſcloſing hypocriſy doth inflict a wound on goodneſs, and expoſeth it to ſcandal; for bad men thence will be prone to infer, that all virtue proceedeth from the like bad principles: ſo the diſgrace caſt on that which is ſpurious will redound to the prejudice of that which is moſt genuine: and if it be good to forbear detracting from that which is certainly falſe, much more is it ſo in regard to that which is poſſibly true; and far more ſtill is it ſo in reſpect to that which is clear and ſure.

2. Hence detraction is very noxious and baneful to all ſociety; for all ſociety is maintained in welfare by encouragement of honeſty and induſtry; the which, when diſparagement is caſt upon them, will be in danger to languiſh and decay: whence a detractor is the worſt

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member that can be of a ſociety; he is a very moth, a very canker therein.

3. Detraction worketh real damage and miſchief to our neighbour; it bereaveth him of that goodly reputation which is the proper reward of virtue, and a main ſupport to the practice of it; it often really obſtructeth and diſappointeth his undertakings, eſtranging thoſe from him, or ſetting them againſt him, who do credulouſly entertain it.

4. The detractor abuſeth thoſe into whoſe ears he inſtilleth his poiſonous ſuggeſtions, engaging them to partake in the injuries done to worth and virtue; cauſing them to entertain unjuſt and uncharitable conceits, to practiſe unſeemly and unworthy behaviour toward good men.

5. The detractor produceth great inconveniences and miſchiefs to himſelf.

He raiſeth againſt himſelf fierce animoſity and wrath: for men that are conſcious to themſelves of their own honeſt meaning and blameleſs proceedings, cannot endure to be abuſed by unjuſt diſparagement; hence are they ſtirred to boil with paſſion, and to diſcharge revenge upon the detractor.

He expoſeth himſelf to general hatred; all good men loathe him as a baſe and miſchievous perſon, and a particular enemy of theirs, always ready to wrong them; every man is apt to ſay, he that doth thus abuſe another will be ready to ſerve me in like manner if I chance to come in his way, vilifying the beſt thing I can do: even the worſt men will diſlike him; for even ſuch affect to do ſomewhat laudable or plauſible, and would be glad to enjoy approbation for it; and cannot therefore brook thoſe who lie in wait to rob them of the fruit of their good endeavours: ſo do all men worthily deteſt and ſhun the detractor, as a common enemy to goodneſs firſt, and then unto men. Farther,

6. The detractor yieldeth occaſion to others, and a kind of right to return the ſame meaſure upon him. If he

hath in him a ſhew of any thing laudable, men will not allow him any commendation from it: for why, conceive they, ſhall he receive that which he will not ſuffer others to enjoy? How can any man admit him to have any real worth or virtue in himſelf who doth not like it or treat it well in another? Hence, if a detractor hath any good in him, he much injureth himſelf, depriving himſelf of all the reſpect belonging thereto. SERM. XIX.

7. Again, the detractor, eſteeming things according to moral poſſibility, will aſſuredly be defeated in his aims: his detraction in the cloſe will avail nothing, but to bring trouble and ſhame upon himſelf; for God hath a particular care over innocence and goodneſs, ſo as not to let them finally to ſuffer: the *good man's righteouſneſs he will bring forth as the light, and his judgment as the noon day.* Wiſe men eaſily will diſcern the foul play, and will ſcorn it; good men ever will be ready to clear and vindicate the truth; worth, however clouded for a time, will break through all miſts, and glorioufly expand itſelf, to the confuſion of its moſt ſly oppoſers. Pſal. xxxvii. 6.

Such are the natural and obvious effects of this practice; the conſideration whereof (together with the cauſes producing it, and the eſſential adjuncts which it did involve) will, I ſhould think, ſuffice to deter us from it.

I ſhall only adjoin one conſideration, which our text ſuggeſteth: *Speak not evil of one another, brethren,* ſaith the Apoſtle: *brethren;* that appellation doth imply a ſtrong argument enforcing the precept: brethren, with eſpecial tenderneſs of affection, ſhould love one another, and delight in each others good; they ſhould tender the intereſt and honour of each other as their own; they ſhould therefore by all means cheriſh and countenance virtue in one another, as that which promoteth the common welfare, which adorneth and illuſtrateth the dignity of their family. We ſhould rejoice in the good qualities and worthy deeds of any Chriſtian, as glorifying our common Father, as gracing our common profeſſion, as edifying the common body, whereof we are members. *Members we are one of another,* and as ſuch ſhould find compla-

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cence in the health and vigour of any part, from whence the whole doth receive benefit and comfort: for one brother to repine at the welfare, to malign the proſperity, to decry the merit, to deſtroy the reputation of another, is very unnatural; for one Chriſtian anywiſe to wrong or prejudice another is highly impious.

To conclude: it is our duty, (which equity, which ingenuity, which charity, which piety do all concurrently oblige us to,) whenever we do ſee any good perſon, or worthy deed, to yield hearty eſteem, to pay due reſpect, gladly to congratulate the perſon, and willingly to commend the work; rendering withal thanks and praiſe for them to the *donor of all good gifts*: unto whom, for all the good things beſtowed upon us, and upon all his creatures, be for ever all glory and praiſe. Amen.

SERMON XX.

AGAINST RASH CENSURING AND JUDGING.

MATTH. vii. 1.

Judge not.

THESE words, being part of our Saviour's moſt divine Sermon upon the Mount, contain a very ſhort precept, but of vaſt uſe and conſequence; the obſervance whereof would much conduce to the good of the world, and to the private quiet of each man; it interdicting a practice, which commonly produceth very miſchievous and troubleſome effects; a practice never rare among men, but now very rife; when, with the general cauſes, which ever did and ever will in ſome meaſure diſpoſe men thereto, ſome ſpecial ones do concur, that powerfully incline to it. SERM. XX.

There are innate to men an unjuſt pride, emboldening them to take upon them beyond what belongeth to them, or doth become them; an exceſſive ſelf-love, prompting them as to flatter themſelves in their own conceit, ſo to undervalue others, and from vilifying their neighbours, to ſeek commendation to themſelves; an envious malignity, which ever luſteth to be pampered with finding or making faults; many corrupt affections, ſpringing from fleſhly nature, which draw or drive men to this practice; ſo that in all ages it hath been very common, and never any profeſſion hath been ſo much invaded, as that of the judge.

But divers peculiar cauſes have ſuch an influence upon

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our age, as more strongly to sway men thereto: there is a wonderful affectation to seem hugely wise and witty; and how can we seem such more, than in putting on the garb and countenance of judges; scanning and passing sentence upon all persons, and all things incident? There is an extreme niceness and delicacy of conceit, which maketh us apt to relish few things, and to distaste any thing; there are dissensions in opinion, and addictedness to parties, which do tempt us, and seem to authorize us in condemning all that differ from us; there is a deep corruption of mind and manners, which engageth men in their own defence to censure others, diverting the blame from home, and shrouding their own under the covert of other men's faults [a]; there are new principles of morality and policy become current with great vogue, which allow to do or say any thing subservient to our interests or designs; which also do represent all men so bad, that, admitting them true, nothing hardly can be said ill of any man beyond truth and justice.

Hence is the world become so extremely critical and censorious, that in many places the chief employment of men, and the main body of conversation is, if we mark it, taken up in judging: [b] every gossipping is, as it were, a court of justice; every seat becometh a tribunal; at every table standeth a bar, whereto all men are cited, whereat every man, as it happeneth, is arraigned and sentenced: no sublimity or sacredness of dignity, no integrity or innocence of life, no prudence or circumspection of demeanour can exempt any person from it: not one escapeth being taxed under some scandalous name, or odious character, one or other. Not only the outward actions and visible practices of men are judged; but their retired sentiments are brought under trial, their inward dispositions have a verdict past on them, their final states are deter-

[a] Expedit vobis neminem videri bonum; quasi aliena virtus exprobratio vestrorum delictorum sit. *Sen. de Vit. B.* xix.

[b] Εἰς τὰ τῶν ἄλλων πολυπραγμονεῖν καὶ καταδικάζειν δαπανᾶται ἡμῖν ἅπας ὁ βίος· καὶ οὐδένα ἂν εὕροις ταχέως, οὐ βιωτικὸν ἄνδρα, οὐ μεταχὸν ταύτης ἐλεύθερον τῆς ἁμαρτίας, καίτοιγε τοσαύτης ἀπειλῆς κειμένης αὐτῇ. *Chrys. ad den.* t. vi. *Orat.* 42.

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mined. Whole bodies of men are thus judged at once, and nothing it is in one breath to damn whole churches, at one puſh to throw down whole nations into the bottomleſs pit. All mankind in a lump is ſeverely cenſured, as void of any real goodneſs or true virtue; ſo fatally depraved as not to be corrigible by any good diſcipline, not to be recoverable even by the grace of God: yea God himſelf is hardly ſpared, his providence coming under the bold obloquy of thoſe, who, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh of ſome in his time, whoſe race doth yet ſurvive, *ſpeak loftily, and ſet their mouth againſt the heavens.* Pſal. lxxiii. 8, 9.

This being too apparently the preſent ſtate of things, and obvious practice of men, it were deſirable that, in order to their being reclaimed, men commonly did well underſtand the nature of this practice, with the heinous guilt, and conſequently the deadly hazard, they do incur thereby: at this purpoſe my diſcourſe ſhall aim, wherein I ſhall endeavour both to deſcribe the nature of the practice forbidden in my text, and to declare the pravity, iniquity, and folly of it.

Judge not. As to the word we may obſerve, that it being in itſelf according to its primitive ſenſe of a middle and indifferent ſignification, is yet frequently in the Scripture uſed in the worſt ſenſe; ſo as to import thoſe acts, or thoſe effects of judgment, which paſs to the diſadvantage of the perſons ſubjected thereto; for condemnation, and for infliction of puniſhment: and this ſenſe here ſurely the word doth principally reſpect, yet not ſo preciſely as to exclude ſomewhat contained in the larger ſenſe: we are ſo prohibited the condemning and puniſhing our neighbour in his good name, that withal ſome acts antecedent, or concomitant to thoſe, are glanced at in the prohibition: undue application thereto, unjuſt proceeding therein are alſo ſignified unlawful; for the meaning of the word and the reaſon of the caſe may be ſo far extended.

But for the fuller and clearer underſtanding of the matter, we muſt obſerve, that there are divers ſorts of judging, or acts reſembling judgment, which do not belong to this

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precept; which it is requiſite to diſtinguiſh from this judging prohibited.

1. That exerciſing public judgment, or adminiſtering juſtice, is not here prohibited, I need not to inſiſt, that is neceſſary; human ſociety could not ſubſiſt, right could not be maintained, nor peace preſerved without it; God thereby governeth the world, earthly judges being his inſtruments and ſubſtitutes; ſuch judgment is not ſo much the act of men, as of God himſelf, by whoſe authority, in whoſe name, for whoſe ſervice it is miniſtered. As Moſes told the judges in his time, *You ſhall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.* And in numberleſs places of Scripture this judgment is allowed and authorized; it therefore is not touched here.

Deut. i. 17.

2. That trial and cenſure, although out of court, and without formal proceſs, which any kind of ſuperiors do exerciſe upon their inferiors, committed to their inſpection and care; ſuch as of parents over children, maſters over ſervants, paſtors over their flock, any governors over their charge, their admonitions, reprehenſions, and corrections are to be excepted hence, as being in themſelves needful and warranted, yea enjoined by God.

3. Neither are fraternal correption or friendly reproof, proceeding out of charitable deſign, upon clear ground, in fit ſeaſon, within reaſonable compaſs, concerned in this prohibition; this being a wholeſome practice, and a duty incumbent on us: *Thou ſhalt,* ſaith the Law, *not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.*

Levit. xix. 17. 1 Theſſ. v. 14.

4. All obſerving and reflecting upon our neighbour's actions, all framing an opinion about them, and expreſſing our minds concerning them are not forbidden. For we are not bound perpetually to ſhut our eyes, or go about hood-winked; nor to ſtop our ears and make ourſelves deaf: and how can we forbear to think according to plain evidence? how can we reſiſt the impreſſions of ſenſe upon our minds? how can we conteſt notorious experience? how alſo, barring ſuch apprehenſions of obvious and ap-

parent things, could we bear teſtimony concerning them? how could we ſignify our approbation or diſlike of them? how could we for his amendment admoniſh or reprove our neighbour, as in ſome caſes we are obliged to do? SERM. XX.

5. We are not hence obliged to think ſo well of all men, as without competent knowledge always to rely upon their pretences, or to intruſt our intereſts in their hands; for common experience acquainteth us that we may be deceived in truſting men, prudence biddeth us in matters of importance not to confide in uncertainties; wherefore we ſhall not be culpable for being wary in ſuch caſes: this indeed is not a poſitive judgment, but only a waving to declare in favour, when ſufficient ground of doing ſo doth not appear; it is only a reaſonable ſuſpecting the poſſibility of miſcarriage in ſome perſons, not a downright aſſerting ill concerning any one man: wherefore to do it as it ſuiteth diſcretion, ſo it doth not thwart juſtice or charity; and cannot therefore be prohibited here.

6. We are alſo not hence obliged, in contradiction to plain ſenſe, to judge well of men; accounting him for a ſaint, or a good man, whom we ſee living diſorderly, or committing ſcandalous offences, plainly repugnant to the rules of piety, juſtice, or ſobriety.

In fine, there are ſome ſpecial caſes and circumſtances, wherein good men excuſably may in ſevere terms declare their reſentment of manifeſt wickedneſs, eſpecially ſuch as is prejudicial to God's honour and public good. Of this there are divers inſtances, which yet hardly can be reduced to common rules, or propoſed for general example; the matter being tickliſh, and men being apt to pervert any liberty or pretence of this kind, by indulging to their own bad humours and paſſions.

Theſe ſorts of allowable judgments being excepted, it is then private, affected, needleſs, groundleſs, raſh, and harſh cenſuring the perſons or actions of our brethren; ſuch as doth reſemble not the acting of a lawful ſuperior, of a needful witneſs, of a faithful friend, but of a judge acting without competent right, upon no good grounds,

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or in undue manner, which is here interdicted: the word *judging* doth well imply the nature of this fault, the manner of our proceeding therein, the grounds of its unlawfulneſs; neither perhaps can we better underſtand our duty in this matter, than by expending what are the properties and obligations of a judge, and comparing our practice thereto; for thence it may plainly appear how unqualified we are to bear this office, and how unduly we execute it.

1. No judge ſhould intrude himſelf into the office, or aſſume a judicial power without competent authority; that is, by delegation from ſuperior powers, or by voluntary reference of the parties concerned. This condition we fail in, whenever without warrant from God, or ſpecial reaſon exacting it from us, we do pry into, ſcan, and tax the actions of our neighbour. When, I ſay, we are pragmatically inquiſitive into the purpoſes and proceedings of our ſuperiors, of our equals, of thoſe who are not ſubject to our charge and care, when we narrowly examine them, when we peremptorily blame them, then do we unduly exalt ourſelves above them, and exerciſe an unwarrantable juriſdiction over them. What ſenſe doth offer, we may receive in; what judgment reaſon doth extort, we may follow; what teſtimony public benefit requireth, we may yield; what expreſſion charity doth call for toward our neighbour's edification, we may ſeaſonably vent: but if we proceed farther in this way, the party concerned may appeal from us as incompetent and unlawful judges of his actions or his ſtate; we are arrogant and injurious in preſuming to exerciſe that office. God is the maſter and judge of men, and without authority from him, we muſt not preſume to judge his ſervants and ſubjects: ſo we are taught by St. Paul, *Who*, ſaith he, *art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth:* and St. James in like manner, upon the ſame ground, expoſtulateth with the cenſurer; *There is*, ſaith he, *one Lawgiver, who is able to ſave, or to deſtroy; who art thou that judgeſt another?* Our Lord himſelf for this reaſon declined intermeddling in the affairs of

1 Pet. iv. 15. 1 Theſſ. iv. 11. Prov. xxvii. 16. 1 Tim. v. 13.

Quid in poteſtatem alienam irruis? quid temerarius Dei tribunal aſcendis? *Opt.* lib. 2.

Rom. xiv. 4.

Jam. iv. 11.

men; *Who*, ſaid he, *made me a judge or divider over you?* SERM. XX.
And ſhall we conſtitute ourſelves in the office, ſhall we ſeat ourſelves on the tribunal, without any commiſſion from God, or call from men? How many judges, if this proviſo were obſerved, would have their quietus! how many cenſurers would be voided hence! Luke xii. 14.

2. A judge ſhould be free from all prejudices, and all partial affections; eſpecially from thoſe which are diſadvantageous to the party in danger to ſuffer; ſuch as tempt or incline to condemn him; from ill-opinion and ill-will, from anger, envy, revengefulneſs, contempt, and the like: for he that is poſſeſſed with theſe, is nowiſe qualified to be a judge; his eyes are blinded, or diſtorted, or infected with bad tinctures, ſo that he cannot diſcern what is right, or that he ſeeth things repreſented in the wrong place, and under falſe colours: his mind is diſcompoſed and diſturbed, ſo that he cannot calmly and ſteadily apprehend or conſider the juſt ſtate of the caſe; his will is biaſſed, and ſtrongly propendeth one way, ſo that he cannot proceed uprightly in a ſtraight and even courſe: being not indifferently affected, but concerned on one ſide, he is become a party, or an adverſary, and thence unfit to be a judge; he hath determined the cauſe with himſelf beforehand, ſo that no place is left to farther diſcuſſion or defence; wherefore before ſuch a judge the beſt cauſe will fall, the cleareſt innocence ſhall not preſerve from condemnation. He therefore that will undertake this office muſt firſt diveſt himſelf of all prejudices, muſt rid himſelf of all paſſions, muſt purify himſelf from all corrupt inclinations, taking care not to come with a condemning mind, or a luſt to puniſh the obnoxious party; otherwiſe a juſt exception lieth againſt him, and reaſonably his juriſdiction may be declined. Levit. xix. 15. Jam. ii. 1. Matt. xxii. 16. 1 Tim. v. 21.

If this rule were put in practice, there would be little cenſuring; for few come to it with a free and pure mind; few blame their neighbours without ſome preoccupation of judgment, or ſome diſaffection toward them.

3. A judge ſhould never proceed in judgment, without careful examination of the cauſe, ſo as well to underſtand Deut. i. 16.

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it. Even thoſe, who out of indiſpenſable duty, or by a juſt power, may call others to account, are yet obliged to be wary, and never to paſs ſentence without due cognizance of the cauſe; otherwiſe they will judge blindly and raſhly; they will either decide wrongly, or ſo truly, that doing it muſt be imputed not to their virtue, but to their fortune; often they will be miſtaken, and it is luck that they are not ſo always: and what plainer iniquity can there be, than that the reputation or real intereſt of any man ſhould be put to the arbitrement of chance; that he ſhould be defamed, or damnified, not for a certain fault, but from an unhappy lot? As things viewed at a diſtance appear much different in bigneſs, ſhape, and colour, from what they are in nature and reality; ſo if we do not look nearly and narrowly, we ſhall greatly miſapprehend the nature, the degrees, the right characters of things and of perſons: then be our pretence to judge never ſo fair, yet our proceeding is unjuſt; then if we do unduly invade the place, it will be a great aggravation of our miſdemeanour: if of our own head and pleaſure we will conſtitute ourſelves judges, yet at leaſt we ſhould act the judge's part, in patiently attending to, and heedfully ſifting the cauſe: if we have not a ſtomach to hear, if we will not afford the care to mind what may be alleged in favour of the party concerned; if we cannot, or will not ſcan every point and circumſtance which may ſerve to acquit him, or to excuſe and extenuate his guilt, why do we undertake to be his judges? why do we engage ourſelves into the commiſſion of ſo palpable injuſtice; yea, of ſo diſgraceful folly? for, *He that anſwereth a matter before he heareth it, it is,* ſaith the Wiſe Man, *a folly and ſhame unto him.* This caution excludeth raſh judgment, from which if men would abſtain, there would be little cenſuring: for nothing is more ordinary, than for men to do like thoſe of whom St. Jude ſaith, Ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἴδασι βλασφημοῦσι, *they rail at what they know not*; they cenſure perſons with whom they are not throughly acquainted, they condemn actions whereof they do not clearly ken the reaſons; they little weigh the cauſes and circum-

Prov. xviii. 13.

Jude 10.

stances which urge or force men to do things; they stand at great distance, and yet with great assurance and peremptoriness determine how things are, as if they did see through them, and knew them most exactly. SERM. XX.

4. A judge should never pronounce final sentence, but *ex allegatis et probatis*, upon good grounds, after certain proof, and upon full conviction. Not any slight conjecture, or thin surmise; any idle report, or weak pretence, is sufficient to ground a condemnation upon; the case should be irrefragably clear and sure before we determine on the worst side [a]: *Judge not*, saith our Lord, *according to the appearance, but judge righteous jndgment*. The Jews, seeing our Lord cure an infirm person upon the sabbath day, presently upon that semblance condemned him of violating the Law; not considering either the sense of the Law, or the nature of his performance; and this he termeth unrighteous judgment. Every accusation should be deemed null, until, both as to matter of fact, and in point of right, it be firmly proved true [b]; it sufficeth not to presume it may be so; to say, it seemeth thus, doth not sound like the voice of a judge; otherwise seeing there never is wanting some colour of accusation, every action being liable to some suspicion, or sinister construction, no innocence could be secure, no person could escape condemnation; the reputation and interest of all men living would continually stand exposed to inevitable danger. It is a rule of equity and humanity, built upon plain reason, that rather a nocent person should be permitted to escape, than an innocent should be constrained to suffer: for the impunity of the one is but an inconvenience, the suffering of the other is wrong; the punishment of the guilty yieldeth only a remote probable benefit; the affliction of the blameless involveth a near certain mischief: wherefore it is more prudent and more righteous to absolve a

John vii. 24.

[a] μὴ πρότερον τὰς ψήφους ἐκφέρειν, πρὶν ἂν ἐναργεῖς ἀποδείξεις γένωνται. *Chrys.* in *Gen.* Hom. 42.

[b] Quod probari non potest, mihi infectum est. *Bern.*

De occultis cordis alieni temere judicare iniquum est, et cum cujus non videntur opera nisi bona, peccatum est ex suspicione reprehendere. *Joh.* iii. 1. Ep. 1.

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man, of whoſe guilt there are probable arguments, than to condemn any man upon bare ſuſpicions. And remarkable it is how God in the Law did preſcribe the manner of trial and judgment, even in the higheſt caſe, and moſt nearly touching himſelf, that of *idolatry; If*, ſaith the Law, Deut. xvii. 4. *it be told thee, and thou haſt heard of it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing certain, that ſuch an abomination is wrought in Iſrael; then ſhalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman, and ſhalt ſtone them.* See what great caution is preſcribed, what pregnant evidence is required in ſuch caſes; it is not enough that it be reported, or come to our ear; diligent inquiry muſt be made, it muſt be found true, it muſt appear certain, before we may proceed to condemn, or execute; it is indeed not fair judgment, but mere calumny, to condemn a man before he doth, by ſufficient proof, appear guilty.

If this rule were regarded, how many cenſures would be prevented! For do not men catch at any ſhadow of a fault? Are they not ready upon the leaſt preſumption to condemn their neighbour? Doth not any, even the weakeſt and vaineſt teſtimony, any wandering hearſay, or vulgar rumour, ſerve to ground the moſt heavy ſentences?

5. From hence is plainly conſequent, that there are divers cauſes wholly exempted from our judgment, and which in no caſe we muſt pretend to meddle with; ſuch as are the ſecret thoughts, affections, and purpoſes of men, not expreſſed by plain words, nor declared by overt acts; for a capacity of judging doth ever ſuppoſe a power of cognizance; and it being impoſſible for us to reach the knowledge of thoſe things, we cannot therefore pretend to judge of them. As it is the property of God to ſearch the hearts and try the reins, ſo it is his prerogative to judge concerning the ſecret motions in them; the which we attempting to do, no leſs vainly and fooliſhly, than preſumptuouſly and profanely, do encroach upon.

This point alſo being regarded, would prevent innumerable raſh judgments; for men commonly do no leſs dive into the thoughts, and reprehend the inward diſpoſitions

and designs of their neighbour, than they do his most apparent and avowed actions; it is almost as ordinary to blame men for the invisible workings of their mind, as for their most visible deportment in conversation. SERM. XX.

6. Hence also it is not commonly allowable to judge concerning the state, either present or final, of our neighbour in regard to God; so as to take him for a wicked man, or to denounce reprobation upon him: for the state of men is not so much determined by single actions, as by a body of practice, or by a long course and tenor of life, compounded and complicated of actions in number and kind unconceivably various: it dependeth not only upon external visible behaviour, but upon the practice of close retirements, and occult motions of soul; upon the results of natural temper, upon the influence of fortuitous circumstances; upon many things indiscernible, inscrutable, and unaccountable to us; the which God alone can perceive and estimate throughly: *God seeth not*, as he did himself tell Samuel, *as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart: he searcheth our hearts, and understandeth our thoughts afar off: he compasseth our path, and is acquainted with all our ways: he weigheth our spirits; he knoweth our frame; he numbereth our steps;* he scanneth our designs, and poiseth all our circumstances exactly; he doth penetrate and consider many things transcending our reach, upon which the true worth of persons and real merit of actions do depend: he therefore only can well judge of men's state. As a specious outside doth often cover inward hollowness and foulness, so under an unpromising appearance much solidity and sincerity of goodness may lodge; a dirty ground doth often contain good seeds within it: our judgment therefore in such cases is likely, at least in degree, to be fallacious and unjust; and therefore it is fit to supersede it, according to the advice and discourse of St. Paul; *He that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every*

Πολλὰ δεῖ τραφῆναι, καὶ παθεῖν, πρὶν ἄλλου καταγνῶναι δυσσέβειαν. *Greg. Naz.* Or. 26.

Ps. cxxxix. 6. 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Isa. xi. 3. Ps. cxxxix. 2, 3.

Prov. xvi. 2. 1 Sam. ii. 3. Ps. ciii. 14. Job xiv. 16.

1 Cor. iv. 5.

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man have praise (that is, a right estimate of his person and deeds) *from God.*

If this were duly considered, many hard thoughts and many harsh words would be spared; men would not be so apt to damn those whom they have no skill to try.

7. Farther: a judge should not undertake to proceed against any man, without warning and citing him to appear, or without affording him competent liberty and opportunity to defend and justify himself. Judgment should not be administered clancularly, in dark corners, but in open court: not suspiciously, in a muttering or whispering way; but frankly, with a clear and audible voice: not upon surprise, but with allowance of leisure and advice, that the party may be able to apprehend his case and manage his plea for his best defence: for it may justly be presumed, that as he is most concerned, so he is best acquainted with his own proceedings, and may allege reasons for them, which no man can so well perceive as himself; it is therefore fit that he should be heard before he is condemned, that he may not suffer wrong; at least that he may be convinced that he doth not, and that our proceeding may be cleared from misprision; that also the world may be satisfied of justice being done; and that likewise false accusers may be liable to due shame and chastisement. The manner of proceeding used by the Romans, and reported by Festus in St. Paul's case, was full of reason and equity: *It is not*, said that governor, *the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he, which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him.* Otherwise indeed any innocence may easily be oppressed irrecoverably, without any defence, and consequently without any means of evasion or redress[c]. We should never yield both ears to the accuser, but reserve one for the accused[d]. The end of justice, we

Acts xxv. 16.

[c] Χρὴ τοὺς ἐννόμως δικάζοντας τῷ κατηγορουμένῳ θατέραν ταῖν ἀκοαῖν ἀκεραίαν φυλάξαι, &c. *Theod.* Ep. 91.

[d] God himself, as some of the Fathers observe, hath shewed us an example of this equity, *Descendam igitur et videbo, &c.* Gen. xviii. 21.

may conſider, is not to condemn, nor to work miſchief to any one, but rather, ſo far as may be, to acquit and prevent evil to all; at leaſt it aimeth to clear the truth, and ſtate the caſe indifferently; wherefore it is juſt, that all advantage that well can be, ſhould be afforded to the obnoxious party for his juſtification and deliverance; at leaſt that he be not denied equal advantage with his proſecutors; humanity would allow him ſome favour; the moſt rigorous juſtice cannot refuſe him leave to conteſt his cauſe upon equal terms: wherefore it is fit that he ſhould be acquainted with his caſe, that competent time and means ſhould be afforded him to prepare for his defence, that his plea ſhould receive, if not a favourable, yet a free audience: the contrary practice is indeed rather backbiting, whiſpering, ſupplanting, or ſycophantry, than fair and lawful judging. SERM. XX.

The obſervation of this rule would alſo cut off many cenſures; for ſeldom it is that our cenſurers do charge men to their faces, but rather take all poſſible care, that what they ſay may never come to the ears of thoſe whom they accuſe; they fear nothing more than being confronted and detected; they decline the ſhame and the requital due to their ſycophantic practice; which is a manifeſt argument of their foul dealing; and they no leſs in reality do thence condemn themſelves than they would ſeem to condemn others.

8. Moreover, a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the ſettled rules of judgment, ſo as never to condemn any man for acting that which is enjoined, or approved, or permitted by them; he muſt not pronounce according to his private fancy, or particular affection, but according to the ſtanding laws: which as they are the only certain rules of moral action, the only grounds of obligation, the only ſtandards of guilt and innocence; ſo in reaſon they ſhould be the ſole meaſures of

Καίτοι σαφῶς ἤδει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκείνων τὴν πονηρίαν. Ἀλλ' ὅμως ἴδῃ κατακλὰς ὄψομαι, διδάσκων ἡμᾶς ἀναμίνειν τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν τέλεσιν. *Theod.* Ep. 119. *P. Pelagius ad Eliam.*

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judging: he that proceedeth otherwiſe is an arbitrary and a ſlippery judge; he encroacheth upon the right and liberty of thoſe with whom he meddleth, pronouncing them guilty whom God and reaſon do proclaim blameleſs. This is that which St. Paul doth reprove in the 14th to the Romans, and otherwhere. The caſe was this: ſome were of opinion, that abſtaining from ſome kinds of meat, and obſerving ſome feſtival times, were matters of duty required by God; others thought it free to eat any thing, and to uſe any times alike: theſe, according to ſuch their private opinions, did cenſure the practices of each other; one party condemned the other as tranſgreſſing duty, the other contemned them as weak in judgment: but the Apoſtle reproveth both as irregular in their behaviour, in taxing one another for matters which on both hands were indifferent; the divine Law having clearly neither enjoined thoſe obſervances, nor prohibited them; ſo that each man had a liberty to do, or to abſtain, as he thought good, or moſt agreeable to his duty, and conducible to his ſalvation. So is it culpable in us to blame any man for doing that which is not repugnant to God's expreſs command, or to the plain dictates of reaſon.

Rom. xiv. 1 Cor. viii. 8. Col. ii. 16.

The obſerving this condition would ſmother many cenſures: for do we not commonly reprehend our neighbours for practices wholly blameleſs, perhaps commendable? Do we not ſometimes grievouſly reproach them for not complying with our deſires, for not ſerving our intereſts, for not jumping with our humours, for not dancing after our pipe; for diſſenting from us in any conceit, although dubious or falſe; for diſcoſting from our practice, although bad or inconvenient? Say we not ordinarily, he is moroſe, peeviſh, ſingular, rude, becauſe he would not *run with us into the ſame exceſs of riot*; he is weak, nice, ſuperſtitious, becauſe he conſtantly and ſtrictly adhereth to his duty; he is negligent, looſe, profane, becauſe he uſeth his liberty in ſome matters indifferent? Bar ſuch matters of obloquy, into how narrow a compaſs would it be reſtrained!

9. Hence farther it is to be ſuppoſed, that a judge

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ſhould be a perſon of good knowledge and ability; well verſed and ſkilful in the laws concerning matters under debate; endued with good meaſure of reaſon, enabling him as to ſift and canvaſs matters of fact, ſo to compare them accurately with the rules of right: for nothing is more abſurd than an ignorant and unſkilful judge. Men therefore of weak capacity, of mean education, of ſmall experience, are qualified to judge in few caſes, moſt things being placed above their reach; ſuch never ſhould preſume to cenſure actions, the worth or moral quality whereof depend upon the ſtating and reſolution of abſtruſe, intricate, or ſubtle queſtions. It is not therefore for mechanics or ruſtics to judge about difficulties of ſcience, about controverſies in religion, about myſteries of policy, or reaſons of ſtate; or to cenſure thoſe who deal in them: in ſo doing they hugely treſpaſs beyond their calling and ſphere; they do ſtrangely miſbecome the bench, and will very untowardly miſbehave themſelves thereon; the deciſion of ſuch matters is to be reſerved to thoſe, who by ſtudy and experience have attained peculiar faculties to do it reſpectively.

"Εκαστος κρίνει καλῶς ἃ γινώσκει, καὶ τούτων ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸς κριτής. *Ariſt. Eth.* lib. iii.

Obſerving this point would draw many down from their uſurped ſeats of judicature, and ſtop numberleſs vain ſentences; we ſhould have very few judges left, if all men would be ſo modeſt and ſo wiſe as not to meddle beyond their ſkill and ability.

10. Again: it is proper for a judge not to make himſelf an accuſer; not to ſeek for miſdemeanours, not to draw more cauſes under his cognizance than are in courſe preſented before him: he ſhould rather judge as out of conſtraint, than of choice; rather as ſorry to find a neceſſity, than glad to ſnatch an occaſion of condemning offenders. So ſhould we rather decline than ſeek the office of cenſuring our brethren, rather conniving at and concealing their faults, than being forward to expoſe them; abſolute reaſon only ſhould induce or indiſpenſable neceſſity force us thereto.

Sine dubio in omnibus ſtatim accuſationibus hoc agendum eſt, ne ad eas libenter deſcendiſſe videamur. *Quint.* xi. 1.

This alſo greatly would diminiſh the trade of cenſuring; for if we ſhould never cenſure without great rea-

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ſon or neceſſity, how ſeldom ſhould we do it? Do we not rather affect to do it cauſeleſsly and needleſsly? Do we not eagerly ſearch after and greedily embrace all occaſions to do it? Is it not a pleaſant entertainment to us, to be carping and cavilling at any body we meet, at any thing we ſee done? Farther,

11. He that pretendeth to judge others ſhould himſelf be innocent; under no indictment, and not liable to condemnation. Is it not very improper for a criminal, for one who is not only in truth and in his own conſcience guilty, but who ſtandeth actually convicted of heinous offences, to ſit upon the bench, determining about the deeds and the ſtates of others? It is the caſe of us all, we are all notoriouſly guilty of heinous crimes before God, we all do lie under the ſentence of his law; we do all ſtand in need of pardon from our Judge, his mercy is our only hope and refuge: and ſhall we then pretend to be judges, or be paſſing ſentence on our brethren? If only thoſe who are free and guiltleſs ſhould judge, who could undertake it? There would ſurely be no more than there appeared then, when in the caſe of the woman taken in adultery our Lord propounded the like condition; Ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν, *he that is without ſin among you, let him caſt the firſt ſtone at her:* upon which propoſition the ſequel was; *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conſcience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldeſt, even to the laſt; and Jeſus was left alone, and the woman ſtanding in the midſt;* ſo infallibly ſhould no man be allowed to judge, who were not himſelf void of like guilt, would every man eſcape cenſure.

Cum ipſe ſis reus, in alterum audes ferre ſententiam? *Opt.* 2.

Pſ. cxliii. 2.

John viii. 7, 9.

12. Laſtly: it is the property of a good judge to proceed with great moderation, equity, candour, and mildneſs; as a general friend, a friend to juſtice, to the public, to mankind, to the party impeached. As a friend to juſtice, he ſhould be careful that the defendant receive no wrong in his credit or intereſt; as a lover of the public, he ſhould wiſh that no offences or ſcandals be found; out of humanity he ſhould deſire that no man may incur the blemiſh of guilt, or pain of ſuffering; he ſhould tender

the party's caſe as compaſſionable, and deſire that he may be delivered from the evil threatening him: this ſhould render him willing to acquit and free the party, apt to apprehend and interpret all things favourably, ready to excuſe and mollify the buſineſs what he can; far from picking faults out of obſcure ſurmiſes or ſlender pretences, from aggravating the miſcarriages that are detected, from ſtretching the blame farther than it will reach of itſelf, or making the caſe worſe than it needs muſt be, from pronouncing a harſh or heavy ſentence thereon. He ſhould always be of council to the defendant, pleading his cauſe ſo far as truth and equity will permit; putting himſelf in his caſe, and thence nowiſe dealing with him more rigorouſly than he, according to impartial judgment, ſhould in the like caſe deem it equal that himſelf ſhould be dealt with: in fine, however the matter in the reſult appear to ſtand, he ſhould avoid rigour and extremity, he ſhould exerciſe clemency and mercy. SERM. XX.

If this courſe were obſerved, innumerable cauſes, which now are ſeverely judged, would never be mentioned, or come under trial, but would preſently be caſt out; many would ſoon, after ſmall diſcuſſion, be voided; few would paſs that extremity of cenſure, which now, by the cruel aſperity of men, they are forced to undergo: for do we not accuſe men for things that are no faults? Do we not exaggerate the guilt of petty faults? Do we not inſult over great miſcarriages with too unmerciful ſeverity, as if they were incorrigible and unpardonable?

Seeing then few of us, according to thoſe reaſonable qualifications and conditions, are capable of being judges; ſeeing, if thoſe equal rules were obſerved, moſt cenſures would be diſcarded; ſeeing hard it is for any man, either warrantably to undertake, or uprightly to diſcharge this office; great reaſon there is for this precept, moſt fit it is that we ſhould be forbidden to judge.

So much for the part explicative and directive; now for the perſuaſive; and for inducing us to eſchew this practice, let us briefly declare the pravity and vanity of it; the performing which will, I ſuppoſe, be ſufficient to diſ-

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ſuade and deter us from it. Be pleaſed only firſt to note, that ſome conſiderations which we ſhall propound will be applicable to ſome kind of bad cenſure, ſome to another, according to the ſeveral defects and incapacities we have to judge lawfully, upon the grounds already touched.

1. Cenſuring is an impious practice in regard to God.

By taking upon ourſelves to judge unduly, without authority, or beyond it, we do invade God's office, ſetting up ourſelves as judges in his room; we uſurp his right, exerciſing juriſdiction over his ſubjects, without order and licence from him: it is St. Paul's argument, *Who art thou that judgeſt another's ſervant?* that is, how intolerably bold and arrogant, how ſacrilegiouſly injurious and profane art thou, to climb up into God's tribunal, and thence to pronounce doom upon his ſubjects?

Rom. xiv. 4.

By raſh judgment in matters not ſubject to our cognizance, (as when we pronounce concerning the ſecret thoughts and intentions of men,) we proudly and perverſely do arrogate to ourſelves the incommunicable perfections of God, who alone can know ſuch things, and determine rightly in ſuch caſes; who therefore hath reſerved them to himſelf, commanding us *to judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.*

1 Cor. iv. 5.

By paſſing ſentence about the ſtate of our neighbour, we do anticipate God's judgment, and by prejudging ſtrive to fruſtrate it. We take upon us to *purge his floor*, to ſever the chaff from the corn, and the tares from the wheat, to diſcriminate the goats from the ſheep[e]; which to perform will be the work of God's infinite wiſdom and juſtice at *the great day.*

By cenſuring our brethren cauſeleſsly, for not complying with our conceits, humours, or practices, we lay hold upon and appropriate to ourſelves God's legiſlative power; we ſubject his law to our fancy and pleaſure; we in effect

[e] Matt. iii. 12, 13. xxv. 32. Quantus arrogantiæ tumor eſt, quanta humilitatis ac lenitatis oblivio, arrogantiæ ſuæ quanta jactatio, ut quis aut audeat aut facere ſe poſſe credat, quod nec Apoſtolis conceſſit Dominus, ut zizania a frumento putet ſe poſſe diſcernere, aut quaſi ipſi paleam auferre, et aream purgare conceſſum ſit, paleas conetur a tritico ſeparare? *Cypr.* Ep. 52.

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condemn his law of error and imperfection; we do at leaſt make ourſelves ſharers with him in the enacting laws, and diſpenſing juſtice. *He*, ſaith St. James, *that ſpeaketh againſt his brother, and judgeth his brother, ſpeaketh againſt the law, and judgeth the law*; that is, he opprobriouſly doth imply the law to be defective, until he doth complete or correct it; making it a guilt not to ſatisfy his will or conceit, beſide the plain intent of the law; the diſpenſation of juſtice is not ſufficient, unleſs he partake therein, taxing whom and why he pleaſeth; God without him is not a perfect lawgiver or judge. Jam. iv. 11.

We are alſo very ingrateful in not being favourable towards our brethren in judgment; when as God is in his judgment ſo benign, patient, and merciful toward us, who *is* not *extreme to mark what we do amiſs*; is not forward to ſeek or find faults, but rather *waiteth to be gracious*, hideth *his face from our ſins*, and *paſſeth by our tranſgreſſions*; doth not aggravate our offences, but rather doth excuſe them, *remembering that we are fleſh*; is not glad of occaſion to puniſh, but *delighteth in mercy*, and *doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men*; is not ſevere, but *puniſheth us leſs than our iniquities deſerve*, and *in his wrath remembereth mercy*. And are we not impious if we do ſo ill requite him, and ſo little reſemble him, in being rigorous and harſh toward our brethren, when they offend, or ſeem to do ſo? Pſ. cxxx. 3. Iſa. xxx. 18. Pſal. li. 9. Mic. vii. 18. Pſ. lxxviii. 39. ciii. 14. Mic. vii. 18. Lam. iii. 33. Ezra ix. 13. Hab. iii. 2.

In fine, cenſuring is impious, as involving the violation of thoſe great commandments, of exerciſing, in all our demeanour and dealing, humility, meekneſs, pity, and mercy toward our brethren; of purſuing and promoting peace among them.

2. Cenſuring, in reſpect to our neighbour, is an unjuſt practice. It is unjuſt to meddle in affairs with which we have nothing to do; to draw thoſe perſons under our juriſdiction who are not ſubject to it, but are liable to render their account at another bar; to puniſh thoſe in their reputation or intereſt, over whom we have no juſt authority, *who have their own maſter, to whom they muſt ſtand or fall.*

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It is most unjust to judge any man without competent means of knowing, or skill to determine his case; to condemn him without diligent trial, without certain proof, without full conviction of his fault; to punish him without just cause, or beyond due measure.

It is very unjust to usurp an interest in the goods which are to our neighbour most proper and dear, his credit and concernments depend thereon, disposing of them as we please, to his disadvantage and prejudice.

It is also very unjust, whenas we do need the candid judgment, the forbearance and pardon of others for many things faulty and offensive that we commit, to refuse the like to others [f].

3. Censuring is also a very uncharitable practice, and so contrary to the principal duty of our religion: it is so eminently in all cases wherein it is unjust; for charity doth virtually contain justice, and transcendeth it; it is so peculiarly whenever it is harsh or rigorous, when it is affected, when it is needless or unprofitable; for charity disposeth us to be gentle, meek, patient, and merciful in all our dealings; it engages us to hide and smother, to diminish and excuse, to pass by and pardon offences: *Charity seeketh no evil*, it *covereth all things*, it *beareth all things*; it tendereth our neighbour's good and advantage of all kinds, (his credit, his interest, his convenience, and pleasure;) it therefore will inflict no more evil than reason and necessity shall indispensably require [g].

1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7.

A censurer is indeed unjust and uncharitable, not only toward those whom he censureth, but also toward those into whom thereby he doth infuse ill opinion, and ill will toward their neighbour; he is guilty of their injustice and uncharitableness, a mischief more irreparable than his own.

[f] —— æquum est
Peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus.
Hor. Serm. i. 3.

Det ille veniam facile, cui venia est opus. *Sen. Tr.*

[g] Οὕτως ἔχω ἐν τοῖς ἀμφιβόλοις, νεῦσαι χρῆναι πρὸς τὸ φιλάνθρωπον, καὶ ἀπογνώσεσιν μᾶλλον, ἢ καταγνώσεσιν τῶν ἐπαιτίων. *Nax.* Or. 21.

4. Cenſuring is a very fooliſh and vain practice in manifold reſpects; as arguing great ignorance and inconſiderateneſs, as producing grievous inconveniences and miſchiefs, eſpecially to the practiſer of it. SERM. XX.

Eſt proprium ſtultitiæ aliorum vitia cernere, oblivisci ſuorum. *Cic. Tuſc.* 1.

It ſignifieth that we do not well underſtand or not well conſider the natural impotency and frailty of mankind; how liable others are to miſtake and ſlip, and how prone we ourſelves are thereto; how, as St. James ſaith, *in many things we offend all;* did we obſerve, or would weigh this, we ſhould not be ſo forward to cenſure, or ſo vehement and bitter in it; we ſhould ſee failing and tripping in many things to be a common caſe, rather demanding commiſeration than cenſure. *in* Jam. iii. 2.

It implieth alſo, that we little conſider how our eſcaping any faults, which our neighbour ſlippeth into, is nowiſe imputable to any worth or virtue in us, ſo much as the good providence and merciful grace of God, guarding or reſcuing us from them; if we did apprehend and reflect on this, it would appear our duty rather to bleſs God for our being protected from miſcarriages, than cenſoriouſly to inſult over thoſe who ſeem to fall into them. It ſignifieth we have no ſight or ſenſe of our own defects; for did we clearly ſee, did we humbly reſent them, that would damp our heat and earneſtneſs to cenſure. It declares a fond ſelf-conceit, that we deem ourſelves ſuperior to our neighbour in wiſdom, and leſs obnoxious to blame, and therefore fit to be his judges; whereas, according to a ſober eſteem of ourſelves, we ſhould appear more fit to ſtand at the bar than to ſit upon the bench; and ſhould thence more dread the one than affect the other.

It ſheweth likewiſe, that we do not rightly conceive the nature, or worthily eſteem the conſequences of this practice: we know not, or regard not, the value of our neighbour's reputation, which by cenſure we do mean to ruin or impair: we perhaps by no means would rob him of his ſubſtance, or of his life; yet we ſcruple not by grievous cenſure to bereave him of his good name; which he, the beſt prizer of his own goods, may eſteem beyond his eſtate or his life itſelf: we think it nothing, or a

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ſlight matter to carp at him; but he feeleth it very painful, and deeply reſenteth it.

It argueth in us an untamed fierceneſs of mind and diſcompoſedneſs of paſſion, which can never conſiſt or cohabit with wiſdom; for a well-ordered, calm, and free mind will be ſlow in conceiving offence or diſlike, moderate in eſtimating things, reſerved in expreſſing its ſentiments, not eaſily tranſported into extremity or exceſs; it conſequently hardly will ſuffer a man to break forth into raſh or harſh cenſure [h]. So many ſigns and arguments of incogitancy and blindneſs this practice doth involve.

5. Farthermore, this practice will produce many great inconveniences and miſchiefs to us.

1. We do thereby provoke, and in a ſort authorize others to requite us in the ſame kind [i]: for nothing more doth excite the indignation, doth inflame the anger, doth engender the hatred of men toward us, than being pragmatical in finding fault, and haſty to cenſure their doings cauſeleſsly or immoderately; nothing ſeeming to them a more certain argument that we bear them ill will, or do contemn them; and if we ſo vex them, they will in requital be as ready, by finding or making faults in us, to vex and trouble us; it engageth their care, and quickeneth their induſtry, and whetteth their invention to obſerve or deviſe matter of recrimination. Men think it not only lawful, but even needful for them, in their own defence, to diſparage the cenſurer, that his judgment may have the leſs weight to their prejudice: ſo that it will infallibly come upon us, as our Lord warneth, uſing it as an argument to diſſuade us from this practice, that, *with what judgment we judge, we ſhall be judged; and with what meaſure we mete, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.*

Matt. vii. 2. Luke vi. 37, 38.

[h] Prov. xii. 16. A fool's wrath is preſently known; but a prudent man covereth ſhame.

Prov. xxix. 11. A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wiſe man keepeth it till afterwards.

[i] ——at tibi contra
Evenit, inquirant vitia ut tua rurſus et illi.
Hor. Serm. i. 3.

Men take it for allowable to retaliate in this way to the height, and stoutly to load the censorious man with censure. SERM. XX.

2. We do by this practice not only expose ourselves to censure, but implicitly, and according to ready consequence, do pass it upon ourselves, seeing we seldom, in kind or equivalently, are ourselves clear of that which we charge upon others; with our own weapon of sharp censure, we through another's side do imprudently wound ourselves; and often, as David did in his parley with Nathan, adjudge ourselves to capital punishment; so that to any censorious person it may be said, in St. Paul's words, *Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.* Vid. Chrys. in Matt. Or. 36. p. 249. 2 Sam. xii. Rom. ii. 1.

3. We do by censuring others aggravate our own faults, and deprive them of excuse, and render ourselves uncapable of mercy and pardon: [k] for of all men, he that is forward and prone to censure, who is rigorous and severe in judging others, deserveth no favour, nor can reasonably pretend thereto. [l] *Inexcusable*, saith St. Paul, *art thou, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest*; for, *thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?* and, Μὴ στενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων. *Do not*, saith St. James, *moanfully complain one against another, lest you be condemned*; and, *He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy*, in his judgment, saith the same Apostle [m]. Which passages imply, that to be unmerciful in this kind, will expose us to the severity of judgment Rom. ii. 1, 3. Jam. v. 9. ii. 13.

k Ὁ πικρῶς τὰ ἀλλότρια ἐξετάζων ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἑαυτὸν πλημμελήμασιν οὐδεμιᾶς ἀπολαῦσεται συγγνώμης ποτέ. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. γ'.

l ——— ἀνθρώπων οἱ πλεῖστοι βραδεῖς μέν εἰσιν τῶν ἰδίων κριταὶ, ταχεῖς δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐξεταστάι. *Naz.* Or. 26.

Οὕτω τῶν μὲν ἑτέροις ἁμαρτανομένων πικροὶ καθήμεθα δικασταὶ, τὰς δὲ ἑαυτῶν δοκοὺς παρορῶμεν. *Chrys. ad Demet.* tom. vi. Or. 52.

m Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως τῶν πεπλημμελημένων ἡμῖν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς σῆς περὶ ἑτέρων οἴσει τὴν ψῆφον ὁ Θεός. *Chrys.* ibid.

Ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ φιλάνθρωπος, καὶ ἥμερος, καὶ συγγνωμονικὸς ὑποτέμνεται τὸν πλείονα τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ὄγκον, οὕτως ὁ πικρὸς, καὶ ὠμὸς, καὶ ἀπαραίτητος πολὺ τοῖς οἰκείοις ἁμαρτήμασι προστίθησι μέγεθος. *Ibid.*

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in regard to our offences; or, that if we deal harſhly with our brethren now, God will then proceed the more ſeverely toward us, when our great cauſe doth come under trial.

4. Indeed cenſuring others is an argument that we do little mind our own caſe, or conſider to what a dreadful judgment we do ſtand obnoxious: did we think of that, we ſhould ſee cauſe rather to employ our leiſure and care in ſtating our own accounts, than in examining thoſe of others; more adviſable it would appear to mind our own caſe, than to buſy ourſelves in canvaſſing and determining the ſtate of our neighbour, finding what great need our actions will have in that day of favourable conſtruction and merciful allowance, we ſhould become candid and mild in reflecting upon the actions of others; we ſhould not be forward to carp at any thing, we ſhould ſcarce have the heart to condemn any man; this St. Paul ſeemeth to imply, when he thus argueth: *Why doſt thou judge thy brother, or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? We ſhall all ſtand at the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt:* that is, why do any of us judge others, ſeeing we muſt all be judged ourſelves? It is not ſeemly, it is not expedient for thoſe, who ſoon muſt be arraigned, and put to anſwer for themſelves, to be buſy in queſtioning and prejudging others; but rather to ſpend their care and pains in preparing for their own account.

Rom. xiv. 10.

Τὰ ἡμέτερα ἐξετάζωμεν, ἃ ὀδύνας ἐροῦμεν κακῶς. *Chryſ. in 2 Tim.* Or. 2.

5. Nothing indeed more cauſeth us to neglect our own caſe, nothing more engageth us to leave our own faults unobſerved and uncorrected, than this humour[n]. It is eaſy to obſerve, that as they who are moſt ſparing and gentle in cenſure are uſually moſt exempt from blame, (for that carefully reflecting upon their own infirmities and defects, ſpending their heat and activity of ſpirit upon amending their own errors and faults, they have

[n] Οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἄνθρωπον κατηγορεῦντα καὶ τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους πολυπραγμονοῦντα βίους τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιμεληθῆναί ποτε ζωῆς. Τῆς γὰρ σπουδῆς ἀπάσης αὐτῷ εἰς τὴν ἑτέρων πολυπραγμοσύνην ἀναλισκομένης, ἀνάγκη τὰ αὐτῷ πάντα ἀσπλῶς κεῖσθαι καὶ ἡμελημένως. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. γ'.

less time, less concernment, less mind to search out and scan the imperfections and misdemeanours of others; they do find less reason also, and therefore have less will to be fierce or severe toward them,) so the most censorious are usually the most stupid in discerning, and most careless in retrenching their own faults. And needs it must be so, for the actions of other men devour their leisure, take up the intention of their spirits, employ the keenness of their passions upon them, so that they cannot and will not attend to themselves; they are so much abroad, they are so very busy otherwhere, that they little know or care what is done at home; while they are *spying* and pulling out *motes from their brother's eye*, they *consider not the beam that is in their own eye*, although never so gross and obvious [b].

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Vid. Chrys. Tom. ii. Or. 42. Sen. de Vit. B. 27. Βραδὺ ἐις ὑπόνοιαν κακῦ τὸ πρὸς κακίαν δυσκίνητον. *Naz.* Orat. 8.

Matt. vii. 3, 4.

6. Hence, I say, it is that commonly the best men are the most candid and gentle, and they are most apt to blame others who deserve worse themselves; that the sharpest tongues and foulest lives do usually go together; that they who are the strictest judges of their own are the fairest interpreters of other men's actions; and they who will least pardon others do most excuse themselves; that they who are strangely acute in descrying other men's faults are stark blind in discerning their own. Our Saviour therefore chargeth such persons with hypocrisy; *Thou hypocrite; first cast the beam out of thine own eye;* implying, that they do but falsely pretend a respect for goodness and zeal against sin, seeing in their own practice they indulge it; that it is indeed rather pride, peevishness, idleness, spleen, or selfish design that acteth them.

7. In fine, the censorious humour, as it argueth ill nature to be predominant, (a vulturous nature, which easily smelleth out, and hastily flieth toward, and greedily feed-

[b] Τὸ κακίας ἐλεύθερον, καὶ ὑφορᾶσθαι κακίαν ἀλλότερον. *Naz.* Ep. 27.

Ὁ μὲν γὰρ κακὸς τάχιστα ἂν καταγνοίη καὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὁ ἀγαθὸς δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦ κακοῦ ἰαδίως. *Naz.* Orat. 21.

Ego mi ignosco, Mænius inquit,
Stultus et improbus hic amor est, dignusque notari.
Hor. Serm. l. 2.

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eth on carrion,) as it ſignifieth bad conſcience; for he that knoweth evil of himſelf is moſt prone to ſuſpect, and moſt quick to pronounce ill concerning others, ſo it breedeth and foſtereth ſuch ill diſpoſitions; it debaucheth the minds of men, rendering them dim and doltiſh in apprehending their own faults, negligent and heedleſs in regard to their own hearts and ways; apt to pleaſe and comfort themſelves in the evils, real or imaginary, of their neighbours; which to do is a very barbarous and brutiſh practice.

Theſe conſiderations may, I hope, ſuffice to perſuade the obſervance of this precept, by the help of God's grace, to which I commend you, and conclude.

Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXI.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs.

Chryſ. in. 2 Cor. Or. 19.

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AS frequently between neighbouring ſtates there do riſe diſſenſions and conteſts about the juſt limits of their territories; ſo doth it frequently happen between virtue and vice, right and wrong, duty and miſcarriage in practice; for although the extreme degrees, and even the middle regions of theſe things are very diſtant, yet the borders of them do lie very cloſe together, and are in a manner contiguous; a certain ridge of ſeparation running between them, which commonly, being very narrow, thin, and obſcure, it is not eaſy to diſcern. So it particularly falleth out in the matter before us, wherein our text is concerned. Duty and offence do nearly confine, and almoſt indiſcernibly differ one from the other; for there are about this caſe precepts which ſeem to contradict; there are duties appearing to thwart one another.

St. Paul here biddeth us to be ſtudious or ambitious of quiet; otherwhere he enjoineth us to be earneſtly active, (to be σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροὶ, *not ſlothful in buſineſs*:) here he would have us to mind our own affairs; otherwhere he preſcribeth, that we ſhould *not look every man to his own things, but every man alſo to the things of others.*

Rom. xii. 11.

Phil. ii. 4.

According to the general drift of Scripture, and the tenor of our religion, we are in charity obliged to con-

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cern ourſelves heartily for the good of our neighbour, and to ſtrive earneſtly in promoting it; we are enjoined ſo far to interpoſe and meddle in the affairs of others, as to watch over them for their good; to inſtruct and adviſe them, to admoniſh and excite them, to check and reprove them upon occaſion; to offer and yield them ſuccour, to compoſe differences between them; to promote their edification and peace: *Let us*, ſaith the Apoſtle to the Hebrews, *conſider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. Let us*, ſaith St. Paul to the Romans, *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*; and, *Exhort yourſelves together, and edify one another;—warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, ſupport the weak*, ſaith he to the Theſſalonians in this Epiſtle.

Κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους. Heb. x. 24. Rom. xiv. 19. xv. 2. 1 Theſſ. v. 11, 14.

To be zealous and earneſt in the maintenance and propagation of truth, of virtue, of piety, is a duty incumbent on us, which implieth care and activity concerning others; that we offer to inſtruct them; that we enter into conteſt with them; that we examine their words and actions; that we preſume to tax and oppoſe them.

Tit. i. 11.

In fine; our religion doth ſeem by the bands of mutual relation, and obligations of charity, ſo to unite us together, ſo to endear us to one another, and to all men, that all things belonging to our brethren do nearly touch us, and ſhould anſwerably affect us; ſo that by intermeddling with any thing relating to their welfare, we can hardly be ſaid to meddle with what doth not concern us.

The condition of things alſo may ſeem to require, that we ſo intermeddle; for the duties and affairs of men are ſo entangled or interwoven, that we can hardly proſecute any concernments of our own, without being engaged in the matters of others: in diſcharging all offices of ſociety, in purſuance of any traffic or commerce, in all intercourſe and converſation, while we tranſact our own buſineſs, we cannot avoid the furthering or obſtructing the buſineſs of others, who are engaged in the ſame or contrary deſigns. Society doth ſubſiſt by combinations of care and pain, regarding common intereſts, ſo that it

ſeemeth impoſſible ſo to mind our own buſineſs, as not to meddle with the buſineſs of others. SERM. XXI.

Yet notwithſtanding St. Paul enjoineth us ſo to affect quiet, as ſimply to mind our own buſineſs, or not to be meddleſome in the concernments of others; for that *doing our own buſineſs* is meant exclufively to meddling with the affairs of others, is plain enough by the importance of τὰ ἴδια, which is emphatical, and ſignifieth only our own, or our proper buſineſs; and becauſe it is joined with *being quiet*, which reſpecteth others, and importeth not ſtirring beyond our own bounds; to be ſo meddleſome, being alſo a practice expreſsly condemned by St. Peter, in that prohibition, *But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a malefactor, or as a buſy-body in other men's matters:* where pragmaticalneſs is, we ſee, not only forbidden, but is coupled with the moſt heinous offences. 1 Pet. iv. 15.

How then ſhall we reconcile theſe things? How ſhall we in the caſe ſever between the bounds of duty and blame? It is indeed ſomewhat difficult to do it preciſely, and with diſtinctions which ſhall reach all caſes. But ſomewhat I ſhall endeavour toward it, by propounding ſome rules and directions, which ſhould commonly be obſerved in our dealing and intercourſe with others: but firſt let us a little reflect upon the terms in which the precept is couched.

Study to be quiet. Study; the word is φιλοτιμεῖσθαι, which ſignifieth to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with the like vehemency of deſire and care, as men are wont to purſue reputation, dignity, and power, the objects of ambition: the expreſſion containeth a remarkable emphaſis, or a grave acumen; for whereas ambition commonly doth prompt men to be reſtleſsly buſy, and engageth them in the concernments proper to others, St. Paul biddeth them to be ambitious the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abſtinence from other affairs beſide their own.

To be quiet: This doth ſignify not a phyſical, but a moral reſt; not a total forbearance of action; not a faſti-

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dious or drowſy liſtleſſneſs to do any thing; not a ſenſeleſs indifferency concerning the matters of others; not an abſolute ſequeſtering ourſelves from common affairs: this is not quiet or tranquillity, the τὸ ἡσυχάζειν here, but a naughty ſloth, ſtupidity, or ſavageneſs: the quiet here meant is oppoſed to diſorderly motion, to turbulency, to contention, to pragmatical curioſity, to all ſuch exorbitant behaviour, whereby the right of others is infringed, their peace diſturbed, their juſt intereſt or welfare any wiſe prejudiced. This quiet is a calm, ſteady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and meaſures preſcribed by reaſon, juſtice and charity, modeſty and ſobriety: ſuch a motion as the heavenly bodies do keep, which ſo move that they ſeem ever to ſtand ſtill, and never diſturb one another: in fine, what a quiet is meant, the ſubſequent words and the context do ſhew: it followeth,

And πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *to do our own buſineſs*, or to act things proper and pertinent to us; things which ſuit to our condition, our ſtation, our vocation; whereby we may diſcharge our own duties, and ſupply our own needs; may work benefit to others, or however avoid being anywiſe burdenſome or troubleſome to them; an inſtance of which practice is immediately ſubjoined; *to work with our own hands—that we may have lack of nothing*; in another place St. Paul calleth it μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργάζεσθαι, *to work with quiet*, oppoſing it to περιεργάζεσθαι, being over-buſy, or pragmatically curious, and to walking diſorderly; that is, beyond the bounds of our calling, or the rules of our duty; ſo as to encroach upon the rights, or moleſt the quiet of others.

2 Theſſ. iii. 12.

The words then, as they do imply an obligation lying upon us to be induſtrious in our own buſineſs, ſo they chiefly deſign to prohibit our meddling with the concernments of others; but how to ſettle the limits between this quiet minding our own buſineſs, and a culpable neglect of the duties concerning others; how to diſtinguiſh between meddling innocently, from being blameably meddleſome, *hic labor, hoc opus eſt*; this is that hard taſk which I am to undertake, but cannot hope

thoroughly to perform. However, the method toward it, which I ſhall obſerve, is this: Firſt, I ſhall touch ſome caſes, in which it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others: then I ſhall propound ſome general rules, according to which ſuch meddleſomeneſs is commonly blameable: in the next place, I ſhall aſſign ſome directions proper to ſome chief and moſt obvious kinds of meddling: and laſtly, offer ſome conſiderations to diſſuade men from this pragmatical humour. SERM. XXI.

1. Superiors may intermeddle with the buſineſs of their inferiors, (that is, of ſuch as are ſubject to their care and charge,) in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office. Magiſtrates may inſpect the carriage, may examine the doings, may reprehend and puniſh the offences of their ſubjects: parents may adviſe, rebuke, and correct their children: ſpiritual guides and paſtors may admoniſh and reprove their flock. Theſe things while, with due prudence, equity, and moderation, they perform, they do indeed πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *do their own buſineſs*; it is their proper work, to which God hath deſigned them, and which reaſon exacteth of them; they are appointed, to uſe St. Paul's expreſſion, *to attend continually upon this very thing*; their proceedings therefore are not to be charged with culpable pragmaticalneſs. Rom. xiii. 6.

2. In any caſe, wherein the honour and intereſt of God is much concerned, we may interpoſe in vindication and maintenance of them. If any man dareth to blaſpheme God's name, we may and ought to ſtand up in its defence; if any man diſparageth religion, we ſhould ſtrive to clear its repute; if any man impugneth any divine truth of moment, we ſhould endeavour to aſſert it; if any man notoriouſly tranſgreſſeth God's law, we may diſcountenance his preſumption, and reprove him for it: every man in ſuch caſes, as God's ſubject, hath not only a commiſſion, but an obligation; is indeed by his allegiance bound to ſerve God, in maintaining the honour and intereſt of his empire: it is foul diſloyalty, it is pitiful baſe-

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ness to forbear meddling in such cases[a]. Thus have good men, without fear or shame, defended religion and truth, against the mightiest powers and most dangerous oppositions that could be: thus *stood up Phineas, and executed judgment*, not only checking, but avenging that heinous scandal: thus Elias maintained the true worship of God against all the corrupters of it, the kings and whole nation of Israel: thus the Prophets did not forbear to tax the wicked manners of the princes, the priests, and the people in their times: thus St. John Baptist did not stick to reprove king Herod for his unlawful practice: so our Saviour censured the superstitious and hypocritical scribes, and he chastised the profaners of God's house: so, in fine, the holy Apostles resolutely did assert God's truth against all the world.

Ps. cvi. 30.

3. When the public weal and safety are manifestly concerned, we may also intermeddle to support or secure them: so may we rebuke him that slandereth or reproacheth our prince; we may check him that would break the peace, we may impeach him that violateth the laws, conducing to public welfare: every man is a soldier against traitors and enemies of his country; every man is born with a commission to defend the public against those which plot its ruin or harm; every man is a party for his prince against rebels, for the church against schismatics, for the law against lawless transgressors, for common peace against those who outrageously disturb it: duty to our superiors, justice and charity to mankind, just regard to our own welfare, allow and oblige us to such meddling.

Tertull.

4. We may also meddle for the succour of right against palpable wrong and outrage: we may help an honest man against a thief assaulting him; we may guard the

[a] Κοινόν ἐστι τὸ ἔγκλημα, δημόσιον τὸ ἀδίκημα· ἔξεστιν ἑκάστῳ τῶν βουλομένων κατηγορεῖν. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. α'.

Κἂν ἀκούσῃς τινὸς ἐν ἀμφόδῳ, ἢ ἐν ἀγορᾷ μέσῃ βλασφημοῦντος τὸν θεὸν, πρόσελθε, ἐπιτίμησον· κἂν πληγὰς ἐπιθεῖναι δέῃ, μὴ παραιτήσῃ; ῥάπισον αὐτοῦ τὴν ὄψιν, σύντριψον αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα, ἁγίασον σοῦ τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς πληγῆς, &c. *Chrys.* ibid.

life of any man againſt an aſſaſſin; we may vindicate the reputation of an innocent perſon aſperſed by a ſlanderous tongue; as Moſes,—*ſeeing one of his brethren ſuffer wrong, defended him; and avenged him that was oppreſſed, and ſmote the Egyptian;* as the penitent thief rebuked his companion, unjuſtly railing upon our Saviour: the common intereſt of juſtice and charity do not only excuſe, but commend meddling in ſuch caſes. SERM. XXI. Acts vii. 24. Luke xxiii. 40.

5. We may likewiſe meddle with the proceedings of others, when our own juſt defence requireth it: we may repel thoſe who attack our ſafety or peace, who invade or riſle our goods, who traduce our good name; we may endeavour to defeat their plots, and to reſtrain their violence. This is indeed doing our own buſineſs; for to preſerve our life with its conveniences and comforts, to maintain our right and juſt intereſt, to keep our honour and reputation clear from ſcandal, is incumbent upon us; we are naturally the patrons, advocates, and guards of thoſe conſiderable goods aſſigned or entruſted to us by Providence. Cum moderamine inculpatæ tutelæ.

6. When the life or welfare, either ſpiritual or temporal, of our neighbour is deeply concerned, and cannot otherwiſe than by our aid be ſupported or relieved, we may lawfully interpoſe to yield it: if we ſee him expoſing his life to any great hazard, or engaging his ſoul into any great ſin, we may in any fair way, (by admonition, advice, reproof, politic device, harmleſs force,) without any invitation or licence, with or againſt his will, preſume to reclaim or reſtrain him. We may ſtop him in his career to ruin or grievous miſchief, we may withhold him from running into a ſnare, or tumbling down a precipice, or drinking in poiſon; we may, as St. Jude ſpeaketh, *ſnatch him out of the fire.* In ſuch caſes we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that our neighbour, being himſelf, will allow us to meddle, or will not be diſpleaſed therewith; if he hath not his wits about him, we may ſupply him with ours in ſuch exigence: his preſent conſent and approbation are not then requiſite, he not being in condition to yield them; he needeth guardians, and opportu- Jude 23. ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἁρπάζοντες. Invito non tribuitur quodcunque pro eo præſtatur. *Reg. J.*

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nity conſtituteth us in that office: extreme and evident need will not only excuſe the liberty we ſhall aſſume, but it obligeth us to uſe our power to ſave him; in caſe of neglect, that ſurly anſwer, *Am I my brother's keeper?* will not ſerve our turn [b]. We may, we ſhould, it is not only innocent, but juſt and laudable for us to be watchful over our neighbour's concernment and deportment, if we do it out of pure charity, in a diſcreet, quiet, and gentle manner.

Furioſis nulla voluntas eſt. *R. J.* Gen. iv. 9.

7. In fine, if any ſignal opportunity of doing our neighbour conſiderable good, eſpecially to his ſoul, doth offer itſelf, we may lawfully, we ſhould in charity embrace it: we may then even obtrude upon him our direction and ſuccour; if he be ſo blind as not to diſcern our good-will, ſo peeviſh as to diſlike our proceeding, ſo ungrateful as not to thank us for our pains, yet our good intent will juſtify us before God, and at the bar of reaſon: and we have, to countenance us therein, the common example of good men, who, for doing thus, have worthily been accounted the friends and benefactors of mankind.

In theſe and the like caſes we may, without offending, intermeddle; in doing ſo we may indeed truly be ſaid to be quiet, and to do our own buſineſs; becauſe there is no exorbitancy or diſorder in ſuch proceeding, becauſe God's law and ſound reaſon have appropriated theſe things to us, and made them our concernment. There is no buſineſs more proper or pertinent to us, than that wherein we labour to promote the glory of God, or to procure the good of men; this is the principal deſign of our being, and therefore employment therein cannot miſbecome us: but we muſt however in ſuch caſes take heed that our pretences are real and well grounded, that our proceedings are regular and fair: we muſt not take or uſe ſuch liberty maliciouſly; we muſt never, out of hypocritical pretence to the maintenance of God's honour,

[b] Μή μοι λίγε τὸ ψυχρὸν τοῦτο ῥῆμα· Τί δέ μοι μέλει; οὐδὲν ἔχω καινὸν πρὸς αὐτὸν, &c. Vid. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. 1. tom. ii. Or. 59. *in Mat.* Orat. 77, 78. *in Joh.* Or. 15. *in Eph.* Or. 19. *Chryſ. in Tit.* Or. 5. *in Hebr.* Or. 30.

of public good, of juſtice, truth, or peace, be irregularly pragmatical or turbulent: this is to be doubly bad, adding to the irregularity of offence, the wickedneſs of fraud and malice. SERM. XXI.

1. We ſhould never, out of ambition, covetous deſire, or ſelf-conceit, ſo meddle as to invade any man's office, or to aſſume the exerciſe of it. A private man ſhould not preſume to act the prince or the ſtateſman, offering to control thoſe who are not under him, to deliberate, debate, determine, or paſs cenſure about political affairs or occurrences. A layman ſhould not intrude himſelf to adminiſter the ſacred functions of authoritative teaching, of diſpenſing the ſacraments, of exerciſing ſpiritual cenſures, of defining theological controverſies, which are committed to the guides and paſtors of the church. No man ſhould ſet himſelf upon the tribunal to judge, or undertake, without licence or invitation, to arbitrate the cauſes of others: doing thus is to encroach upon God, and to uſurp upon man: we encroach upon God, aſſuming to ourſelves powers not derived from his order, and deſerting the ſtation aſſigned us by his providence; we uſurp upon man, exerciſing authority over him, which he is not bound to ſtoop unto.

2. We ſhould not, without call or allowance, meddle with our ſuperiors, ſo as to adviſe them, to reprehend them, to blame or inveigh againſt their proceedings; for this is to confound the right order of things, to treſpaſs beyond the bounds of our calling and ſtation, to do wrong, not only to them, but to the public, which is concerned in the upholding their power and reſpect: it is indeed a worſe fault than aſſuming the enſigns of their dignity, or counterfeiting their ſtamps; for that is but to borrow the ſemblance, this is to enjoy the ſubſtance of their authority.

Nothing in this buſy and licentious age is more uſual, than for private men to invade the office, to exerciſe the duties, to canvaſs and control the actions of their ſuperiors; diſcuſſing what they ought to do, and preſcribing laws to them; taxing what is done by them; murmuring

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at their decrees, and inveighing againſt their proceedings: every one is finding holes in the ſtate, and picking quarrels with the conduct of political affairs: every one is reforming and ſettling the public according to models framed in his own conceit. Things, ſaith one, are out of order; the conſtitution is very defective, and ought to be corrected; ſuch a law in all reaſon ſhould be repealed, and ſuch an one enacted; here our ſtateſmen were out of their politics, and there our lawgivers failed in point of equity or prudence. No, clamours another no leſs eagerly, all things ſtand as well as can be; nothing can be amended, or ought to be altered; our eſtabliſhment in all reſpects is more perfect than Plato's commonwealth, or the ſtate of Utopia. Thus doth each man appoint himſelf counſellor of ſtate, and turns legiſlator without any call from the king, or choice of the country: every one ſnatcheth at the ſceptre, and inveſts himſelf with the ſenator's robe: every one acteth a prince and a biſhop, or indeed is rather a cenſor and controller of both orders; not conſidering the wrong he committeth, nor the arrogance he practiſeth, nor the miſchiefs which naturally enſue upon ſuch demeanour: for to direct or to check governors is in effect to exauctorate or depoſe them, ſubſtituting ourſelves in their room: and what greater injury can we do them or the public? To fix or reverſe laws belongeth to the higheſt authority and deepeſt wiſdom, which it is enormous preſumption for us to arrogate to ourſelves: by attempting ſuch things we confound the ranks of men, and courſe of things; we ruffle the world, we ſupplant public tranquillity; and what greater miſchief than this can we do among men?

It is the buſineſs and duty of thoſe whom God hath conſtituted his repreſentatives and miniſters to deliberate and conclude what is to be done; and for the due performance of their charge they are accountable to their maſter, not to us; *Nobis obſequii gloria relicta eſt*[c]; our

[c] Tibi ſummum rerum judicium dii dedere; nobis obſequii gloria relicta eſt. *M. Terent. apud Tac. Ann. V. C.*

duty and our privilege (for ſo it is, if we could underſtand it, it being far more eaſy and ſafe) it is to ſubmit and obey with quiet and patience; if we do more, we are therein irregular, and no leſs undutiful to God than to our ſuperiors; we forget thoſe divine rules and precepts; *Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may ſay to him, What doeſt thou? Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake. Do all things without murmurings and diſputings.* We conſider not what judgments are denounced upon thoſe whoſe character it is *to deſpiſe government, to be preſumptuous and ſelf-willed, not to be afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities.* SERM. XXI. Eccleſ. viii. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 18. Phil. ii. 14. 2 Pet. ii. 10.

We do not weigh the nature of the things we meddle with, nor the advantages of the perſons whom we tax, nor our own incapacity to judge rightly about them. There is a kind of ſacredneſs in the myſteries of ſtate: as the myſteries of faith do ſurpaſs natural reaſon, ſo do thoſe of ſtate tranſcend vulgar capacity: as prieſts by ſpecial grace are qualified beſt to underſtand the one, ſo are princes by like peculiar aſſiſtance enabled to penetrate the former. He that employeth them in that great work of governing the world, and maketh them inſtruments of his providence, is not wanting in affording to them direction and aid needful for the diſcharge of their duty; whence their judgments of things are ſomewhat more than human, and their words may with us paſs for oracular; *A divine ſentence,* the wiſe King ſaid, *is in the lips of the king; his mouth tranſgreſſeth not in judgment.* According to the ordinary reaſon of things, they are beſt able to judge of ſuch things, being, by reaſon of their eminent ſtation, able to diſcern more and farther than others; having by experience and conſtant practice acquired a truer inſight into things, and a better ſkill to manage them: whereas we being placed beneath in a valley, can have no good proſpect upon the grounds and cauſes of their reſolutions and proceedings: we, for want of ſufficient uſe and exerciſe, cannot ſkill to balance the contrary weights and reaſons of things; to ſurmount the difficulties and rubs, to unfold the knots and intrigues, Prov. xvi. 10.

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which occur in affairs of that kind; we cannot expect thoſe ſpecial influences of light and ſtrength from heaven toward judging of affairs, which do not properly concern us: wherefore we are altogether incompetent judges, and impertinent dealers about thoſe things; it is great odds, that in doing ſo we ſhall miſtake and miſbehave ourſelves; we conſequently do vainly and naughtily to meddle with them. If the love of public good doth tranſport us, let us reſtrain ourſelves.

3. We ſhould not indeed ſo much as meddle with the affairs of our equals, (thoſe I mean not who do equal us in dignity or worth, but all ſuch who are not ſubject to our command or charge, however otherwiſe inferior to us: thoſe, I ſay, we ſhould not meddle with,) ſo as to control or croſs them; to direct, or check, or cenſure their proceedings againſt their will, or without ſpecial reaſon engaging us thereto: for this is alſo to uſurp an undue authority, this argueth ſelf-conceit, this containeth immodeſty and arrogance.

4. We ſhould not, without the deſire or leave of parties concerned, intermeddle in the ſmaller temporal intereſts of others, upon pretence to further them, or with deſign to croſs them; for every man ſhould be left to himſelf to chooſe and to manage his own buſineſs, proſecuting it in the method he beſt liketh, (conſiſtent with law and juſtice toward others,) without interruption or control: every man hath a right to do ſo, every man deſireth it, every man commonly hath a capacity ſufficient for it; for each man is apt to ſtudy his own buſineſs, to weigh his caſe, to poiſe his abilities with the circumſtances in which he ſtandeth; and thence is likely to get righter notions concerning the ſtate of his affairs, to deſcry better ways of accompliſhing them, than others leſs regarding them can do: every man is beſt acquainted with his own humour and temper, and thence can pick his buſineſs, and wind the management of it, ſo that it ſhall comply with them, or not grate upon them. However, as every man in point of intereſt and honour is moſt concerned in the ſucceſs, and ſuffereth moſt by fruſtration

of his endeavours, ſo it is equal that a free choice of his proceedings ſhould be allowed him, without impediment or diſturbance; which enjoying, he will more contentedly bear any diſappointment that ſhall happen. This eſpecially we ſay, in reſpect to matters of leſſer conſequence, (ſuch as moſt worldly intereſts are,) by the ill ſucceſs whereof our neighbour is not extremely damaged or hurt; for in ſuch caſes the immodeſty and arrogancy of meddling, with the vexation and trouble it is apt to work, do commonly much outweigh any benefit we can preſume by our meddling to procure. SERM. XXI.

5. We ſhould not indeed ever in matters of indifferent and innocent nature ſo far meddle, as, without conſiderable reaſon or need, to infringe any man's liberty, to croſs his humour, to obſtruct his pleaſure, however diſcordant theſe may be to our judgment and palate. Every man hath a particular guſt for diet, for garb, for divertiſements and diſports, (ariſing from particular complexion, or other unaccountable cauſes,) and fit it is that he ſhould ſatisfy it; it is enough that what he doeth ſeemeth good, and reliſheth to himſelf: if we check him therein, we ſhall ſeem impertinent and troubleſome, and therefore we ſhall really be ſo; for it is not our office to be taſters, to be dreſſers, to be maſters of the ſports to all men: we in ſuch matters would pleaſe our own fancy, and therefore we ſhould not about them offend others; it is incivility, it is injuſtice to do it.

6. We ſhould never offer to put a force upon any man's inclination, or ſtrive to bend it unto a compliance with ours; in attempting that we ſhall commonly be diſappointed, and we ſhall never come fairly off: for ſome are ſo tough, they will never yield to us; none will comply againſt the grain, without regret and diſpleaſure: if you extort a compliance with your deſire, you thereby do loſe their good opinion and good will; for no man liketh to be overborne with violence or importunity.

7. We ſhould not in converſation meddle ſo as to impoſe our opinions and conceits upon others: in converſation with our equals, we have a liberty to propound our

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judgment, and declare our reaſons for it; but if our judgment doth not take, nor our reaſons perſuade, we ſhould have done; to preſs farther is rude, to be diſpleaſed for it is vain, to be angry or violent is unjuſt; for by the law of converſation every man taketh himſelf to have an abſolute right to uſe and follow his own reaſon; and he that affects to deprive any man thereof, will paſs for a petty tyrant, a clown, or an idiot. To retain the ſatisfaction which our own perſuaſion affordeth, is enough to content a juſt and ſober mind, without triumphing over the underſtandings of others.

8. We ſhould not ordinarily in converſe affect or undertake to teach; for this implies a pretence to a kind of ſuperiority, and a preferring ourſelves to others in wiſdom; which argueth vanity, and is offenſive to thoſe with whom we converſe, who care not to be dealt with as diſciples or underlings. We may with our equals modeſtly diſpute the caſe upon even ground, as fellow-ſtudents of knowledge, or advocates of truth; but we muſt not peremptorily dictate, or pronounce with authority, like maſters or judges.

Nec quid agatur in alia domus alia per te noverit. *Hier. Ep.* 2.

9. We ſhould indeed be cautious of interrupting any man's diſcourſe, or of taking his words out of his mouth: for this is a rude way of diſpoſſeſſing men of that which by common law of ſociety they ſuppoſe themſelves to enjoy, ſpeaking their mind through, and perfecting their diſcourſe; it is an implicit accuſation of impertinency or weakneſs in their ſpeech; it is an argument that we deem ourſelves wiſer than they, or able to ſpeak more to the purpoſe: it is therefore an unſociable and diſtaſteful practice.

10. We ſhould be careful of intrenching upon any man's modeſty in any way, either of commendation or diſpraiſe, ſo as to put him to the bluſh, or to expoſe him unto ſcorn. Sober men care not to be the ſubjects of talk; no man can endure to be the object of ſport: we ſhould not therefore thruſt any man upon the ſtage; it is vexatious, and therefore always diſcourteous, ſometimes very injurious.

11. It is good to be very ſtaunch and cautious of talk-

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ing about other men and their concernments, in way of paſſing characters on them, or deſcanting upon their proceedings for want of other diſcourſe: this is the common refuge of idleneſs, and the practice of fiddling goſſips, who, becauſe they will do nothing themſelves, muſt be reflecting upon the doings of others; and that they may not ſay nothing, will talk impertinently: φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι, St. Paul well coupleth together, that is, frivolous *tattlers and buſy-bodies; and withal,* ſaith he of ſuch goſſiping women, 1 Tim. v. 13. *they learn to be idle, wandering about from houſe to houſe; and not only idle, but tattlers alſo, and buſy-bodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not.* To affect talking about others is indeed a great temptation to ſpeaking things which we ought not to ſpeak, words of unjuſt and uncharitable obloquy. Vid. Chryſ. in Heb. xxxi. 3.

12. Further; we ſhould not be inquiſitive into the deſigns of men; for this, beſide the vain curioſity and impertinency of ſo doing, is to aſſail their modeſty, and an adventure to vex both them and ourſelves: thy neighbour perhaps, as moſt adviſed men are, is deſirous to keep his purpoſe cloſe to himſelf; then by inquiry thou either forceſt him unwillingly to diſcloſe what he would not, or to give thee a repulſe, which he liketh not to do; and which whenever he doth, he is diſpleaſed: what is pumped out comes up againſt nature, and bringeth regret with it; and if we cannot get any thing out, we yet cauſe diſturbance within; and ourſelves are not well ſatisfied in the diſappointment. Orat. 21. Percontatorem fugito. Φιλοπευστία τῶν ἐν ἀπορρήτῳ.

13. We ſhould not preſs into the retirements of men; to do ſo is not only immodeſt and rude, but unjuſt: it is immodeſt to deſire to know from any man what he is aſhamed or unwilling to ſhew: it is rude to diſturb any man in the enjoyment of his lawful freedom, to interrupt him in his converſation with himſelf, to obſtruct his private ſatisfactions: it is unjuſt to bereave a man of that leiſure and opportunity which he poſſeſſeth, of doing that which he beſt liketh, and perhaps is greatly concerned in; of enjoying his own thoughts, of meditating upon his concerns, of examining his ways, of compoſing his paſ- Arcanum neque tu ſcrutaberis ullius unquam, Commiſumque teges, et vino tortus et ira.

SERM. XXI. ſions, of ſtudying truth, of devotion and intercourſe with his God, of contriving and carrying on in any wiſe the welfare of his own ſoul. Why doth he retire, but to ſhun diverſion, or that he may be maſter of his time and thoughts? Why then are we ſo unkind, or ſo unjuſt, as to deprive him of thoſe contents and advantages?

14. We ſhould not pry or peep into men's ſecrets; it is a practice upon many accounts blameable.

It is commonly impertinent curioſity; for men hide things, becauſe they do not think others concerned to know them; the concealment argueth their opinion to be ſuch, and conſequently that he is fondly curious who would ſearch into them: *Why*, ſaid he well to one, who, ſeeing him carry a baſket covered, did aſk what was in it, *doſt thou ſeek to know, when thou ſeeſt it covered, that thou mayeſt not know* [d]?

It is foully diſcourteous, becauſe offenſively depriving men of the ſatisfaction they take in concealing their matters; encroaching upon the innocent freedoms which they would enjoy, without rendering account to any; treſpaſſing upon their baſhfulneſs, or fruſtrating their diſcretion; for therefore men chooſe to keep things cloſe, becauſe they like not, or judge it not expedient, to declare them.

Eccleſ. vii. 21. *Take no heed unto all words that are ſpoken, leſt thou hear thy ſervant curſe thee.*

It is alſo groſsly injurious to deal thus; for it is a robbery of what is moſt dear to men; which they with more care reſerve and guard, than they do their gold or their jewels: ſo that to break open the cloſet of a man's breaſt, to ranſack his mind, to pilfer away his thoughts, his affections, his purpoſes, may well be deemed a worſe ſort of burglary or theft, than to break open doors, to rifle trunks, or to pick pockets.

It is a practice in the common opinion of men worthily eſteemed very diſhoneſt and treacherous; for men generally do ſuppoſe each other to be under a tacit, but well-

[d] Τὸ τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου χάριεν πρὸς τὸν ἐρωτῶντα τὶ φέρει συγκεκαλυμμένον, διὰ τοῦτο συγκεκάλυπται. *Plut.* περὶ πολυπρ.

underſtood compact, obliged mutually (as they tender greatly the retaining their own ſecrets, ſo) to abſtain from attempting to diſcover the ſecrets of others; to do otherwiſe is therefore taken for an act of perfidious enmity, and a violation of mutual confidence.

In fine, to peep into chinks, to liſten at doors or windows, to mind whiſpers, to dive into letters and papers, and the like practices, are the practices of inſidious eves-droppers, ſpies, and ſycophants, which common humanity will not endure.

Yea, if the knowledge of what our neighbour would conceal doth caſually arrive to us, it is adviſable to ſmother it, it is inhumanity to reveal it to his prejudice. *To reveal ſecrets*, is a practice condemned in Scripture as odious and baſe. *He that goeth about as a tale-bearer, revealeth ſecrets. A tale-bearer revealeth ſecrets; but he that is of a faithful ſpirit concealeth the matter.* Prov. xx. 19. Prov. xi. 13.

Not to take up, or ſcatter reports prejudicial. Ecclus. xix. 7, 10. Μηδέποτε δευτερώσῃς λόγον— Ἀκήκοας λόγον; συναποθανέτω σοι.

A wiſe man would not willingly anywiſe know the ſecrets of others, but gladly would ſhun them, although offering themſelves to his knowledge; that he may be freed from the burden of keeping them, and the danger of venting them, to the diſtaſte, wrong, or prejudice of others: and he is commended for his diſcretion, who, to a prince aſking him, *What of his he ſhould impart to him?* replied, *Whatever you pleaſe, except your ſecrets*[e]. Them he well thought unſafe to keep, and dangerous to utter. How fooliſh then is it voluntarily to intrude, or carefully to ſearch into them!

15. We ſhould not lie in wait to ſurpriſe or catch any man at advantage, to overthrow him when he trips, to inſult upon his miſtake or his diſaſter; to do thus is always ill manners, it is ſometimes barbarous inhumanity. Goodneſs in ſuch caſes would diſpoſe a man to ſupport, relieve, and comfort another, if he demandeth, or his caſe needeth ſuch meddling.

[e] Philippides apud Plut. in Apoph. ad Lyſimach. Τινός σοι, εἶπεν, τῶν ἐμῶν μεταδῶ; κακεῖνος, Οὗ βούλει πλὴν τῶν ἀποῤῥήτων.

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16. Laſtly; we ſhould never, at leaſt with much earneſtneſs, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to others, and which we do not, or may not handſomely pretend to underſtand ſo well as others: ſuch are affairs beſide our profeſſion, which if we underſtand not, it is a folly, in a peremptory manner, to treat of them; if we do underſtand them, it is yet undecent to conteſt or dictate about them, in the preſence at leaſt of thoſe who profeſs them: thus ſhould private men beware, at leaſt in that magiſterial or eager way, to meddle with political affairs, illiterate men with ſcholaſtical, laymen with theological, unexperienced men with any ſuch matters, the comprehenſion whereof dependeth upon ſkill and exerciſe: no man ſhould be forward to meddle with things extraneous to his way and calling: doing ſo is wont to create much offence, it hath uſually much immodeſty and much folly in it; often it containeth much injuſtice.

Theſe are ſome more general rules concerning the matter in hand: I ſhould now, if time did permit, inſiſt upon ſome particular kinds of meddling, *advice, reproof, interpoſing in conteſts*; but, in regard to your patience, I ſhall proceed no farther at preſent.

SERMON XXII.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs.

IN a former diſcourſe upon theſe words, I have already ſhewed, SERM. XXII.

I. In what caſes it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others.

II. Next, I propounded ſome general rules concerning this matter, according to which we may diſcern in what caſes meddling with the affairs of others is commonly blameable. Thus far I have proceeded.

III. I ſhall now give ſome directions concerning particular kinds of meddling. And becauſe they are many, I ſhall at preſent only inſiſt upon three; (referring others to other occaſions:) they are, *advice*, *reproof*, *interpoſing in conteſts*, and contentions.

I. As to meddling in *advice*, we may do well to obſerve theſe directions.

1. Adviſe not (except upon call) a ſuperior, or one more eminent than thyſelf in authority, in dignity, or in age: for he that offereth to adviſe, doth thereby claim to himſelf a kind of ſuperiority, or excellence, above another; and it is not well conſiſtent with the reverence and reſpect due to our betters to ſeem to do ſo. They ſhould

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be wiſer than we; at leaſt it becometh us not to declare we think they are not. If they aſk advice, we may without preſumption give it, ſuppoſing it to be not ſo much their defect of knowledge as prudent caution, which maketh them willing to hear what any man can ſay to the caſe: but to obtrude it on them argueth we think them to need it, and ourſelves able to direct them; which is preſumption, and will paſs for arrogance.

2. We ſhould not indeed, with any violence or importunity, thruſt advice upon our equals, or upon any man not ſubject to our charge, who is unwilling to receive it; for this is alſo an exalting ourſelves in ſkill and wiſdom above him, and implieth a contemptuous opinion concerning his knowledge; that he is ſo weak as to need advice, and yet more weak in not ſeeking it when needful from us; which practice conſiſteth not with modeſty, and needs muſt breed offence: it is indeed unjuſt; for every man of right is to be allowed to act by his own advice, and to chooſe his own counſellors.

3. Be not obſtinate in preſſing advice: if he that aſketh thy counſel do not like it, deſiſt from urging farther, and reſt content. If thou haſt performed the part of a faithful friend, of a good man, of a charitable Chriſtian, in adviſing what ſeemeth beſt to thee, that may abundantly ſatisfy thee; for the reſt, *ipſe viderit*, it is his concernment more than thine: if thou pretendeſt that he muſt follow thy advice, or art diſpleaſed becauſe he doth not ſo, thou makeſt thyſelf a commander, not a counſellor; the which to appoint thee was beſide his intention; he meant to ſeek thy help, not to forfeit his own liberty; and thou art not juſt in pretending to ſo much.

4. Affect not to be a counſellor, nor let any conſiderations, except of friendſhip, humanity, or charity, eaſily diſpoſe thee to accept the office: it is not worth the while to undertake it as a matter of reputation, or becauſe it ſeemeth to argue a good opinion concerning thy ſkill and ability; for it is a critical and dangerous thing to adviſe, becauſe if the buſineſs ſucceedeth well according to thy advice, the principal uſually carrieth away the profit

and the praiſe; his judgment, his induſtry, his fortune are applauded; little commendation or benefit accrueth to the counſellor: but if it proſper not, the main weight of blame is ſurely laid upon him that adviſed the courſe. If you, ſaith the party, and ſay the lookers on, had not thus directed, it had not thus fallen out. SERM. XXII.

5. Wherefore it is commonly expedient not to adviſe otherwiſe than with reſervation and diffidence: it is, we may ſay, the moſt probable courſe I know, but I queſtion whether it will ſucceed; I hope well of it, but do not thoroughly confide therein. This modeſt and diſcreet way, whatever the event ſhall be, will ſhelter thee from blame; yea, will advance the reputation of thy ſagacity: for if it fail, thy reaſon to ſuſpect will be approved; if it proſper, the goodneſs of thy judgment will be applauded: whereas the confident director, if ſucceſs croſſeth his advice, is exclaimed upon for his raſhneſs; if ſucceſs favoureth, he is not yet admired for his wiſdom, becauſe he ſeemed to be ſure; it being more admirable to gueſs the beſt among doubtful things, than to determine that which is certain. So much for meddling about *advice*.

II. For *reproof*, (which is neceſſary, and a duty upon ſome occaſions,) we may do well to follow theſe directions.

1. Reprove not a ſuperior; for it is exerciſing a power over him, and a puniſhing him; we thereby therefore do ſoar above our pitch, we confound ranks, and pervert the order ſettled among men; the practice containeth irreverence and preſumption, it ſeemeth injurious, and is ever odious. What the miniſters of God, or ſpiritual paſtors, do in this kind, they do it by ſpecial commiſſion, or inſtinct, (as the prophets in reprehending princes and prieſts, as St. John Baptiſt in reproving Herod;) or as ordinary ſuperiors in the caſe of ſpiritual guidance, being *ſet over us* for that purpoſe, and *watching for our ſouls*, for which *they muſt render an account*: yet they muſt do it with great moderation and diſcretion: Πρεσβυτέρῳ μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς, *Rebuke not an elder*, (or one more aged than thyſelf,) *but intreat him as a father*, (that is, adviſe him in the moſt Levit. xix. 17. Epheſ. v. 11. Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Tim. v. 1.

SERM. XXII. reſpectful and gentle manner,) is the charge of St. Paul to B. Timothy. In caſe of grievance or ſcandal, it becometh inferiors not proudly or peremptorily to criminate and tax, but humbly to remonſtrate and ſupplicate for redreſs.

2. Reprove not raſhly, and without certain cognizance of the fact; for to reprove for things not done, or, which in moral reckoning is the ſame, for things not apparent, is both unjuſt, and argueth a malignant diſpoſition: it is unjuſt to puniſh ſo much as the modeſty of any man, without clear evidence and proof; it is malignity to ſuſpect a man of ill, it is calumny to charge blame on him upon ſlender pretences, or doubtful ſurmiſes.

3. Reprove not alſo raſhly as to the point of right, or without being able to convince the matter to be aſſuredly culpable: to reprove for things not bad, or not unqueſtionably ſuch, (for things that are, or perhaps may be indifferent and innocent,) is alſo unjuſt, and ſignifieth a tyrannical diſpoſition: it is unjuſt anywiſe to puniſh a man without clear warrant of law; it is tyrannical to impoſe upon men our conceit, or to perſecute them for uſing their liberty, following their judgment, or enjoying their humour; which in effect we do when we reprove them for that which we cannot prove blameable: it is, St. James ſaith, *a judging the law*, or charging it with defect, when we condemn perſons for things not prohibited by it: *He*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that ſpeaketh againſt his brother, and judgeth his brother, ſpeaketh againſt the law, and judgeth the law.* Jam. iv. 11.

Both theſe kinds of raſh reproof are very inconvenient, as breeding needleſs offence and endleſs contention; for whoever is thus taxed will certainly take it ill, and will contend in his own defence: no man patiently, for no ſufficient cauſe or ſure ground, will lie under the ſtroke of reproof, which always ſmarteth, but then enrageth when it is ſuppoſed to be inflicted unjuſtly or maliciouſly: even thoſe who contentedly will bear friendly reproof, can worſe brook to be cauſeleſsly taxed.

4. Reprove not for ſlight matters; for ſuch faults or de-

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fects as proceed from natural frailty, from inadvertency, from miſtake in matters of ſmall conſequence; for it is hard to be juſt in ſuch reproof; or ſo to temper it as not to exceed the meaſure of blame due to ſuch faults: they occur ſo often, that we ſhould never ceaſe to be carping, if we do it upon ſuch occaſions; it is not worth the while, it is not handſome to ſeem diſpleaſed with ſuch little things; it is ſpending our artillery upon a game not worth the killing. Reproof is too grave and ſtately a thing to be proſtituted upon ſo mean things; to uſe it upon ſmall cauſe derogateth from its weight, when there is conſiderable reaſon for it; friendſhip, charity, and humanity ſhould cover ſuch offences. In fine, it is unſeemly to reprove men for ſuch things as all men, as themſelves, are ſo continually ſubject unto: it is therefore better to let ſuch things paſs without any mark of diſpleaſure or diſlike.

Mitem animum, et mores modicis erroribus æquos. *Juv. Sat.* 14.

5. Reprove not unſeaſonably; not when a perſon is indiſpoſed to bear reproof, or unfit to profit thereby; not when there is likely to be no good effect come from it; when thou ſhalt only thereby conjure up an evil ſpirit of diſpleaſure and enmity againſt thyſelf. Reproof is a thing of itſelf not good or pleaſant, but ſometimes needful, becauſe wholeſome and good in order to the end; it ſhould therefore be adminiſtered as phyſic, then only when the patient is fit to receive it, and it may ſerve to correct his diſtemper; otherwiſe you will only make him more ſick, and very angry.

It is ever almoſt unſeaſonable to reprove ſome perſons, as ſcorners, impudent, incorrigibly profligate perſons, who will hate the reprover without regarding the reproof: *He that reproveth a ſcorner getteth to himſelf ſhame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himſelf a blot. Reprove not a ſcorner, leſt he hate thee.* To be maligned, to be derided, to be aſperſed with reproach and ſlander, is all one ſhall get by reproving ſuch perſons; it is both proſtituting good advice, and expoſing oneſelf to miſchief, as our Saviour intimateth in that prohibition: *Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither caſt your pearls*

Prov. ix. 7, 8. xv. 12.

Matt. vii. 6.

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As ſuch men ever, ſo moſt men in ſome ſeaſons are uncapable of reproof; ſo are men in calamity, who are diſcompoſed by grief, the which is rather to be mitigated by comfort than increaſed and exaſperated by blame; ſo are men in a paſſion, who have no ears to hear, no reaſon to judge, no will to comply with advice: reproof is apt to produce rather anger and ill-blood, than any contrition or kindly remorſe in perſons ſo affected.

It is alſo uſually not ſeaſonable to reprove men publicly, when their modeſty is highly put to it, and their reputation grievouſly ſuffereth; for this is an extreme ſort of puniſhment, and is taken for needleſs; it is extreme, becauſe men had rather ſuffer any way than in their honour; it is deemed needleſs, becauſe it may be miniſtered privately.

6. Reprove mildly and ſweetly, in the calmeſt manner, in the gentleſt terms; not in a haughty or imperious way, not haſtily or fiercely; not with ſour looks, or in bitter language; for theſe ways do beget all the evil, and hinder the beſt effects of reproof: they do certainly inflame and diſturb the perſon reproved; they breed wrath, diſdain, and hatred againſt the reprover; but do not ſo well enlighten the man to ſee his error, or affect him with kindly ſenſe of his miſcarriage, or diſpoſe him to correct his fault: ſuch reproofs look rather like the wounds and perſecutions of enmity, than as remedies miniſtered by a friendly hand; they harden men with ſtomach and ſcorn to mend upon ſuch occaſion. If reproof doth not ſavour of humanity, it ſignifieth nothing; it muſt be like a bitter pill wrapped in gold, and tempered with ſugar, otherwiſe it will not go down, or work effectually.

7. Affect not to be reprehenſive; ſeem not willingly to undertake the place of a reprover; appear to be merely drawn thereto by ſenſe of duty, or exigency of friendſhip, or conſtraint of charity and good-will. For to affect reproving is a ſign of ill-nature and arrogance, that we delight to obſerve the faults, that we love to inſult upon

the infirmities and infelicities of other men; which is the part of a domineering and cruel humour. A truly good man indeed would be glad to be excuſed from the office; it is the moſt unpleaſant thing he can do to be raking in men's ſores, and cauſing ſmart to his neighbours; far more gladly would he be commending their good deeds, and cheriſhing their virtue. Nothing therefore but conſcience and charity can put him on this employment. But ſo much for meddling in reproof. SERM. XXII.

III. Another kind of meddling is, *interpoſing in the conteſts* and contentions of others. As to this, we may, briefly, do well to obſerve theſe directions.

1. We ſhould never meddle, ſo as to raiſe diſſenſions, or to do ſuch things as breed them: we ſhould by no means create miſunderſtandings, or diſtaſtes, between our neighbours: we ſhould not inſtil jealouſies, or ſurmiſes: we ſhould not miſconſtrue words or actions, to an offenſive ſenſe or conſequence: we ſhould not convey ſpiteful tales: we ſhould not diſcloſe the ſecrets of one to another. Theſe practices engender enmity and ſtrife among men; and are therefore inhuman, or rather diabolical; for the Devil is the great makebate in the world.

2. We ſhould not foment diſſenſions already commenced, blowing up the coals that are kindled, by abetting the ſtrife, or aggravating the cauſes thereof; it is not good to ſtrengthen the quarrel, by ſiding with one part, except that part be notoriouſly oppreſſed or abuſed: in ſuch a caſe indeed, when juſtice calleth for them, we may lend our advice and aſſiſtance; and may bear the inconvenience of being engaged, as Moſes honeſtly and generouſly did, when he ſuccoured his brother that ſuffered wrong; otherwiſe it is adviſeable to keep ourſelves out of the fray, that we do not encourage it by our taking part, and involve ourſelves in the miſchiefs of it.

3. Eſpecially we ſhould not make ourſelves parties in any faction, where both ſides are eager and paſſionate; for then even they who have the juſter cauſe are wont to do unjuſt things, in which it is hard for any man engaged not to have ſhare, at leaſt not to undergo the imputation

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of them: it is wiſdom therefore in ſuch caſes to hold off, and to retain a kind of indifferency; to meddle with them is, as the Wiſe Man ſaith, to *take a dog by the ears;* which he that doth, can hardly take care enough of his fingers.

Prov. xxvi. 17.

4. We ſhould not interpoſe ourſelves (without invitation) to be arbitrators in points of difference: we may cautiouſly mediate, perhaps, or adviſe to agreement; but not pretend as judges with authority to decide the controverſy: this ſavoureth of arrogance, this will work trouble to us, and bring the diſpleaſure of both ſides upon us; it is hard, in doing ſo, to avoid becoming parties, and offending one ſide. Our Lord therefore did, we ſee, wave this office, and put off the invitation with a *Who made me a divider, or a judge between you?*

οἱ ἐν μέσῳ ὄντες ἀθῶν-ται ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων. *Ariſt.*

5. If we would at all meddle in theſe caſes, it ſhould be only in endeavouring, by the moſt fair and prudent means, to renew peace, and reconcile the diſſenters; if we can by exhortation and perſuaſion to peace, by removing miſpriſions, by repreſenting things handſomely, by mitigating their paſſions, bring them to good terms, this is a laudable meddling, this is a bleſſed practice. So I leave this particular, and finiſh the directive part of my diſcourſe.

IV. I ſhall now farther only briefly propoſe ſome conſiderations inducing to quietneſs, and diſſuaſive from pragmaticalneſs; ſuch as ariſe from the nature, properties, cauſes, and effects of each; ſerving to commend the one, and diſparage the other.

1. Conſider that quietneſs is juſt and equal, pragmaticalneſs is injurious. When we contain ourſelves quiet, and mind only our own buſineſs, we allow every man his right, we harm no man's repute; we keep ourſelves within our bounds, and treſpaſs not on the place or intereſt of our neighbour; we diſturb not the right order and courſe of things: but in being pragmatical we do wrongfully deprive others of their right and liberty to manage their buſineſs; we prejudice their credit, implicitly charging them with weakneſs and incapacity to diſ-

patch their affairs without our direction; we therefore, upon our own unequal and partial judgment, do prefer and advance ourſelves above them; we aſſume to ourſelves in many reſpects more than our due, withdrawing it from others. In fine, no man loveth that others ſhould invade his office, or intrude into his buſineſs; therefore in juſtice every man ſhould forbear doing ſo toward others. SERM. XXII.

2. Quietneſs ſignifieth humility, modeſty, and ſobriety of mind; that we conceit not ourſelves more wiſe than our neighbour; that we allow every man his ſhare of diſcretion; that we take others for able and ſkilful enough to underſtand and manage their own affairs: but pragmaticalneſs argueth much overweening and arrogance; that we take ourſelves for the only men of wiſdom, at leaſt for more wiſe than thoſe, into whoſe buſineſs we thruſt ourſelves.

3. Quietneſs is beneficial to the world, preſerving the general order of things, diſpoſing men to keep within their rank and ſtation, and within the ſphere of their power and ability, regularly attending to the work and buſineſs proper to them; whereby as themſelves do well, ſo the public doth thrive: but pragmaticalneſs diſturbeth the world, confounding things, removing the diſtinction between ſuperior, inferior, and equal, rendering each man's buſineſs uncertain; while ſome undertake that which belongeth not to them: one buſy-body often, as we find by experience, is able to diſturb and peſter a whole ſociety.

4. Quietneſs preſerveth concord and amity: for no man is thereby provoked, being ſuffered undiſturbedly to proceed in his courſe, according to his mind and pleaſure: but pragmaticalneſs breedeth diſſenſions and feuds: for all men are ready to quarrel with thoſe who offer to control them, or croſs them in their way; every man will be zealous in maintaining his privilege of chooſing, and acting according to his choice; and cannot but oppoſe thoſe, who attempt to bereave him of it; whence between the buſy-body aſſailing, and others defending their liberty, combuſtions muſt ariſe.

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5. Quietneſs, to the perſon endued with it, or practiſing it, begetteth tranquillity and peace; for he that letteth others alone, and cometh in no man's way, no man will be apt to diſquiet or croſs him; he keepeth himſelf out of broils and factions: but the buſy-body createth vexation and trouble to himſelf; others will be ready to moleſt him in his proceedings, becauſe he diſturbeth them in theirs: he that will have a ſickle in another's corn, or an oar in every man's boat, no wonder if his fingers be rapped; men do not more naturally bruſh off flies, which buz about their ears, ſit upon their faces or hands, and ſting or tickle them, than they ſtrive to drive away clamorous and encroaching buſy-bodies. *Let*, ſaith St. Peter, *none of you ſuffer as a buſy-body in other men's matters*; it is, he intimateth, a practice whereby a man becometh liable to ſuffer, or which men are apt to puniſh ſoundly: and ſo the Wiſe Man, implying the fondneſs and danger of it, *He*, ſaith he, *that paſſeth by, and meddleth with ſtrife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*; that is, without any probable good effect, he provoketh a creature that will ſnarl at him and bite him.

1 Pet. iv. 15.

Prov. xxvi. 17.

6. Quietneſs is a decent and lovely thing, as ſignifying good diſpoſition, and producing good effects; but pragmaticalneſs is ugly and odious. Every man gladly would be a neighbour to a quiet perſon, as who by the ſteady calmneſs and ſmoothneſs of his humour, the inoffenſive ſtillneſs and ſweetneſs of his demeanour, doth afford all the pleaſure of converſation, without any croſs or trouble. But no man willingly would dwell by him, who is apt ever to be infeſting him by his turbulent humour, his obſtreperous talk, his tumultuous and furious carriage; who, upon all occaſions, without invitation or conſent, will be thruſting in his eyes, his tongue, his hand; prying into all that is done, dictating this or that courſe, taxing all proceeding, uſurping a kind of juriſdiction over him and his actions: no man will like, or can well endure ſuch a neighbour. It is commonly obſerved, that pride is not only abominable to God, but loathſome to man;

and of all prides, this is the moſt offenſive and odious; for the pride which keepeth at home, within a man's heart or fancy, not iſſuing forth to trouble others, may indeed well be deſpiſed, as hugely ſilly and vain; but that which breaketh out to the diſturbance and vexation of others, is hated as moleſtful and miſchievous. SERM. XXII.

7. Quietneſs adorneth any profeſſion, bringing credit, reſpect, and love thereto; but pragmaticalneſs is ſcandalous, and procureth odium to any party or cauſe: men uſually do cloak their pragmatical behaviour with pretences of zeal for public good, or of kindneſs to ſome party, which they have eſpouſed; but thereby they do really caſt reproach, and draw prejudice upon their ſide: if it be a good cauſe, they do thereby wrong it, making it to partake of the blame incident to ſuch carriage, as if it did produce or allow diſorder; if it be a bad cauſe, they wrong themſelves, aggravating the guilt of their adherence thereto; for it is a leſs fault to be calm and remiſs in an ill way, than buſy or violent in promoting it. Nothing hath wrought more prejudice to religion, or hath brought more diſparagement upon truth, than boiſterous and unſeaſonable zeal; pretending in ways of paſſion, of fierceneſs, of rudeneſs to advance them: a quiet ſectary doth to moſt men's fancy appear more lovely, than he that is furiouſly and factiouſly orthodox: the ornament of *a meek and quiet ſpirit is*, ſaith St. Peter, *in God's ſight, of great price;* and it is alſo very eſtimable in the opinion of men. 1 Pet. iii. 4.

8. Quiet is a ſafe practice, keeping men not only from needleſs incumbrances of buſineſs, but from the hazards of it, or being charged with its bad ſucceſs: but pragmaticalneſs is dangerous; for if things go ill, the meddler ſurely will be loaded with the blame; the profit and commendation of proſperities will accrue to the perſons immediately concerned; but the diſaſter and damage will be imputed to thoſe who meddled in the buſineſs; to excuſe or eaſe themſelves, men will caſt the diſgrace on thoſe who did project or further the undertaking: he

Τῷ ὄντι φαίνεται ἰ κατὰ τὴν ἡσυχίαν βίος ἀκίνδυνόν τι καὶ ἀσφαλὲς ἔχειν *Chryſ. apud Plut.*

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therefore that would be ſecure, let him be quiet; he that loveth peril and trouble, let him be pragmatical.

9. It is conſequently a great point of diſcretion to be quiet, it yielding a man peace and ſafety without any trouble; and it is a manifeſt folly to be pragmatical, it being only with care, pains, and trouble, to ſeek diſſatisfaction to others, and danger to himſelf; it being alſo to affect many not only inconveniences, but impoſſibilities.

Is it poſſible for any man to graſp or compaſs an infinity of buſineſs? Yet this the pragmatical man ſeemeth to drive at; for the buſineſſes of other men are infinite, and into that abyſs he plungeth himſelf, who paſſeth beyond his own bounds; by the ſame reaſon that he meddleth with any beſide his own, he may undertake all the affairs in the world; ſo he is ſure to have work enough, but fruit ſurely little enough of his pains.

Is it imaginable that we can eaſily bring others to our bent, or induce men to ſubmit their buſineſs to our judgment and humour? Will not he that attempteth ſuch things aſſuredly expoſe himſelf to diſappointment and regret? Is it not therefore wiſdom to let every man have his own way, and purſue his concernments without any check or control from us?

Ὁ πολῦπρα πράσσων πολῖσθ' ἁμαρτάνει βροτῶν. Eurip.

10. We may alſo conſider, that every man hath buſineſs of his own ſufficient to employ him; to exerciſe his mind, to exhauſt his care and pains, to take up all his time and leiſure. To ſtudy his own near concernments, to provide for the neceſſities and conveniences of his life, to look to the intereſts of his ſoul, to be diligent in his calling, to diſcharge faithfully and carefully all his duties relating to God and man, will abundantly employ a man; well it is if ſome of them do not encumber and diſtract him: he that will ſet himſelf with all his might to perform theſe things, will find enough to do; he need not ſeek farther for work, he need not draw more trouble on him.

Ἀπεράγμονας εἶναι ἐπιτήδειον γὰρ τὸ καθῆκον. Zenon. apud Laert. Chryſoſt. tom. ii. Eth. 64.

Seeing then every man hath burden enough on his ſhoulders, impoſed by God and nature, it is vain to take

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on him more load, by engaging himſelf in the affairs of others; he will thence be forced, either to ſhake off his own buſineſs, or to become over-burdened and oppreſſed with more than he can bear. It is indeed hence obſervable, and it needs muſt happen, that thoſe who meddle with the buſineſs of others are wont to neglect their own; they that are much abroad can ſeldom be at home; they that know others moſt are leaſt acquainted with themſelves: and the wiſe Hebrew, *The wiſdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leiſure,* (σοφία σοφιςοῦ ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς,) *and he that hath little buſineſs ſhall be wiſe;* (ὁ ἐλασσούμενος πράξει αὐτὸ σοφισθήσεται.) Whence it is ſcarce poſſible that a pragmatical man ſhould be a good man; that is, ſuch an one who honeſtly and carefully performeth the duties incumbent on him.

Ecclus. xxxviii. 26.

Philoſophers therefore generally have adviſed men to ſhun needleſs occupations, as the certain impediments of a good and happy life; they bid us endeavour ἁπλῶν ἑαυτοὺς, *to ſimplify ourſelves,* or to get into a condition requiring of us the leaſt that can be to do. St. Paul intended the ſame when he adviſed us, μὴ ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, *not to be entangled in the negociations of life:* and our Saviour, when he touched Martha for *being troubled about many things.* So far therefore we ſhould be from taking in hand the affairs of other men, that we ſhould labour to contract our own, and reduce them to the feweſt that we can; otherwiſe we ſhall hardly attain wiſdom, or be able to perform our duty [a].

2 Tim. ii. 4.

Luke x. 41. τυρβάζῃ περὶ πολλά.

11. But ſuppoſe us to have much ſpare time, and to want buſineſs, ſo that we are to ſeek for divertiſement, and muſt for relief fly to curioſity; yet it is not adviſeable to meddle with the affairs of other men; there are divers other ways more innocent, more ſafe, more pleaſant, more advantageous to divert ourſelves, and ſatisfy curioſity [b].

Tacitus ſaith of the Stoicks ſect, —quæ turbidos et negotiorum appetentes facit.

[a] Ὁ σοφὸς, πανπράγμων, καὶ ἀπράγμων. *Democ. Sen.* Ep. 72, 22. Tertullian calleth Stoicism, Quietis magiſterium. *De Pall.* v.

[b] Omnium occupatorum conditio miſera eſt, eorum tamen miſerrima, qui ne ſuis quidem occupationibus laborant. *Sen. de Brev. Vitæ,* xix.

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Nature offereth herſelf, and her inexhauſtible ſtore of appearances to our contemplation; we may, without any harm, and with much delight, ſurvey her rich varieties, examine her proceedings, pierce into her ſecrets. Every kind of animals, of plants, of minerals, of meteors preſenteth matter, wherewith innocently, pleaſantly, and profitably to entertain our minds. There are many noble ſciences, by applying our minds to the ſtudy whereof, we may not only divert them, but improve and cultivate them: the hiſtories of ages paſt, or relations concerning foreign countries, wherein the manners of men are deſcribed, and their actions reported, may afford us uſeful pleaſure and paſtime; thereby we may learn as much, and underſtand the world as well, as by the moſt curious inquiry into the preſent actions of men; there we may obſerve, we may ſcan, we may tax the proceedings of whom we pleaſe, without any danger or offence: there are extant numberleſs books, wherein the wiſeſt and moſt ingenious of men have laid open their hearts, and expoſed their moſt ſecret cogitations unto us; in purſuing them we may ſufficiently buſy ourſelves, and let our idle hours paſs gratefully; we may meddle with ourſelves, ſtudying our own diſpoſitions, examining our principles and purpoſes, reflecting on our thoughts, words, and actions; ſtriving thoroughly to underſtand ourſelves; to do this we have an unqueſtionable right, and by it we ſhall obtain vaſt benefit, much greater than we can hope to get by puddering in the deſigns or doings of others. Pragmaticalneſs then, as it is very dangerous and troubleſome, ſo it is perfectly needleſs; it is a kind of idleneſs, but of all idleneſs the moſt unreaſonable[c]: it is at leaſt worſe than idleneſs, in St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion. For, *I had rather*, ſaid he, *be idle more than I ſhould, than over-buſy*[d]. Other conſiderations might be added; but theſe, I hope, may be ſufficient to reſtrain this practice,

[c] Ἀνδρὶ Λυδῷ πράγματα οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐξιλᾶσθαι ἐπρίατο. *Adag. apud Suidam.*

[d] Ἀργὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος, ἢ περίεργος δίχομαι. *Greg. Naz.* Or. 26.

ſo unprofitable and uneaſy to ourſelves, and, for the moſt part, ſo injurious and troubleſome to others. SERM. XXII.

Now the God of peace make us perfect in every good word and work, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXIII.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTH. xxii. 37.

Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

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Deut. vi. 5. x. 12. πειράζων αὐτόν. πρώτη ἐντολή.

Luke x. 27.

being of God, according to the moſt common notion that name bears, muſt needs diſcern himſelf obliged firſt and chiefly to perform thoſe acts of mind and will toward him, which moſt true and earneſt love do imply: different expreſſions of love may be preſcribed, peculiar grounds of love may be declared in ſeveral ways of religion; but in the general and main ſubſtance of the duty all will conſpire, all will acknowledge readily, that it is love we chiefly owe to God; the duty which he may moſt juſtly require of us, and which will be moſt acceptable to him. It was then indeed the great commandment of the old (or rather of the young and leſs perfect) religion of the Jews, and it is no leſs of the more adult and improved religion which the Son of God did inſtitute and teach: the difference only is, that Chriſtianity declares more fully how we ſhould exerciſe it; and more highly engages us to obſerve it; requires more proper and more ſubſtantial expreſſions thereof; extends our obligation as to the matter, and intends it as to the degree thereof: for as it repreſents almighty God in his nature and in his doings more lovely than any other way of religion, either natural or inſtituted, hath done, or could do; ſo it proportionably raiſes our obligation to love him: it is, as St. Paul ſpeaketh, τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας *the* laſt *drift*, or the ſupreme pitch *of the* evangelical *profeſſion*, and inſtitution, to love; to love God firſt, and then our neighbour *out of a pure heart, and good conſcience, and faith unfeigned:* it is *the bond*, or knot *of* that *perfection* which the Goſpel enjoins us to aſpire to: it is the firſt and principal of thoſe goodly *fruits*, which *the Holy Spirit* of Chriſt produceth in good Chriſtians. It is therefore plainly with us alſo the great commandment and chief duty: chiefly great in its extent, in its worth, in its efficacy, and influence: moſt great it is, in that it doth (eminently at leaſt, or virtually) contain all other laws and duties of piety; they being all as branches making up its body, or growing out of it as their root. St. Paul ſaith of the love toward our neighbour, that it is πλήρωμα τοῦ νόμου, *a full performance of the laws* concerning him; and that *all commandments*, ἀνακεφαλαιοῦνται, *are re-*

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1 Tim. i. 5.

Coloſſ. iii. 14.

Matt. v. 48.

Galat. v. 22.

Rom. xiii. 9, 10.

Gal. v. 14.

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Matth. xxii. 40.

Levit. ii. 13. ix. 24. xx. 1.

2 Cor. v. 14.

1 Joh. ii. 5.

Joh. xiv. 23.

1 Joh. v. 3.

diſcourſe; even the ſum, the ſoul, the ſpring of all our religion and duty. And becauſe it is requiſite, both for our direction how to do, and the examination of ourſelves whether we do as we ought, that we ſhould underſtand what we are ſo far obliged to; that we may be able to perform it, and that we be effectually diſpoſed thereto, I ſhall uſe this method; I will firſt endeavour to explain the nature of this love commanded us; then, to ſhew ſome means of attaining it; laſtly, to propound ſome inducements to the purchaſe and practice thereof. SERM. XXIII.

I. For the firſt part; we may deſcribe love in general (for it ſeems not ſo eaſy to define it exactly) to be an affection or inclination of the ſoul toward an object, proceeding from an apprehenſion and eſteem of ſome excellency or ſome conveniency therein, (its beauty, worth, or uſefulneſs,) producing thereupon, if the object be abſent or wanting, a proportionable deſire, and conſequently an endeavour to obtain ſuch a propriety therein, ſuch a poſſeſſion thereof, ſuch an approximation or union thereto, as the thing is capable of; alſo a regret and diſpleaſure in the failing ſo to obtain it; or in the want, abſence, and loſs thereof; likewiſe begetting a complacence, ſatisfaction, and delight in its preſence, poſſeſſion, or enjoyment; which is moreover attended with a good-will thereto, ſuitable to its nature; that is, with a deſire that it ſhould arrive unto, and continue in its beſt ſtate; with a delight to perceive it ſo to thrive and flouriſh; with a diſpleaſure to ſee it ſuffer or decay in any wiſe; with a conſequent endeavour to advance it in all good, and preſerve it from all evil. Which deſcription containing the chief properties of love in common, do in ſome ſort (not to inſiſt upon abſtracted notions, or in examples remote from our purpoſe) all of them well agree to that love which we owe to God, according to the tenor of this law, and in the degree therein expreſſed; that is, in the beſt manner and higheſt degree; for even of this divine love the chief properties (prerequiſite thereto, or intimately conjoined therewith, or naturally reſulting from it) I conceive are theſe.

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1. A right apprehenſion and firm perſuaſion concerning God, and conſequently a high eſteem of him as moſt excellent in himſelf and moſt beneficial to us: for ſuch is the frame of our ſoul, that the perceptive part doth always go before the appetitive, that affection follows opinion, that no object otherwiſe moves our deſire, than as repreſented by reaſon, or by fancy, good unto us: what effect will the goodlieſt beauty, or the ſweeteſt harmony have upon him, who wants ſenſe to diſcern, or judgment to prize them? This is our natural way of acting; and according to it, that we may in due meaſure love God, he muſt appear proportionably amiable, and deſirable to us; we muſt entertain worthy thoughts of him, as full of all perfection in himſelf; as the fountain of all good; as the ſole author of all that happineſs we can hope for or receive: as he, in poſſeſſion of whom we ſhall poſſeſs all things deſirable; in effect and virtue, all riches, all honours, all pleaſure, all good that we are capable of; and without whom we can enjoy no real good or true content: which eſteem of him, how can it otherwiſe than beget affection toward him? If the faint reſemblances, or the ſlender participations of ſuch excellencies (of that incomprehenſible wiſdom, that uncontrollable power, that unconfined bounty, that unblemiſhed purity, which are united in him, and ſhine from him with a perfect luſtre; if, I ſay, the very faint reſemblances, and imperfect participations of theſe excellencies) diſcerned in other things, are apt to raiſe our admiration, and allure our affection toward them; if the glimmering of ſome ſmall inconſiderable benefit, the ſhadow of real profit diſcovered in theſe inferior empty things, is able ſo ſtrongly to attract our eyes, and fix our hearts upon them, why ſhould not from a like, but ſo much greater cauſe, the like effect proceed? whence can it be that the apprehenſion of an object ſo infinitely lovely, ſo incomparably beneficial (if not paſſing curſorily through our fancy, but deeply impreſſed upon our mind) ſhould not proportionably affect and incline us toward him with all that deſire,

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that delight, that good-will which are proper to love? If we think, as the Pſalmiſt did, that *there is none in heaven or in earth comparable to God*, (comparable in eſſential perfection, comparable in beneficial influence,) why ſhould we not be diſpoſed alſo to ſay with him; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.* Such a reverent eſteem is the proper foundation upon which true love is built, and which upholds it: whence, as the love of God doth commonly denote all the duties of religion; ſo doth fear (or reverence to him) likewiſe in ſcripture ſtyle comprehend and expreſs them all; it being the root from whence love doth ſprout, and by which it is nouriſhed; it being the beginning of that true wiſdom by which we embrace and faſten our affection upon the ſovereign good. Hence we may obſerve, that thoſe devout perſons, whoſe hearts were fulleſt of this love, their minds were moſt employed in meditation upon the divine excellencies, and upon the beneficial emanations from them in bounty and mercy upon the creatures; their tongues being tuned by their thoughts, and their inward eſteem breaking forth into praiſe. *Every day, all the day long, at all times did they bleſs God, praiſe his name, ſpeak of his righteouſneſs, ſhew forth his ſalvation*, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes his practice, ariſing from love enlivened by the eſteem of God, and the apprehenſion of his excellent goodneſs: from whence alſo that ſtrong faith, that conſtant hope, that cheerful confidence they repoſed in him; that hearty approbation of all his counſels and purpoſes; that full acquieſcence of mind in his proceedings; that entire ſubmiſſion of their underſtanding to his diſcipline, and reſignation of their will to his good pleaſure; that yielding up themſelves (their ſouls and bodies, their lives and goods) to his diſpoſal, with all the like high effects and pregnant ſigns of love did flow: but,

Pſ. lxxxix. 6. Pſal. lxxiii. 25. Comp. Pſal. cxiii, 17, 18. Pſ. xxxi. 23. xxxiv. 9. cxlv. 19, 20. Pſ. cxlvi. 7. civ. 33. xxxiv. 1. lxxi. 15. cxlv. 2. xxxv. 28. lxxi. 8.

2. Another property of this love is an earneſt deſire of obtaining a propriety in God; of poſſeſſing him, in a manner, and enjoying him; of approaching him, and being, ſo far as may be, united to him. When we ſtand upon

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ſuch terms with any perſon, that we have a free acceſs unto and a familiar intercourſe with him; that his converſation is profitable and delightful to us; that we can upon all occaſions have his advice and aſſiſtance; that he is always ready in our needs, and at our deſire, to employ what is in him of ability for our good and advantage, we may be ſaid to own ſuch a perſon, to poſſeſs and enjoy him; to be tied, as it were, and joined to him (as it is ſaid 1Sam.xviii. 1. *the ſoul of Jonathan was knit to the ſoul of David, ſo that he loved him as his own ſoul*). And ſuch a propriety in, ſuch a poſſeſſion of, ſuch an alliance and conjunction to himſelf, God vouchſafes to them, who are duly qualified Heb.xi.16. for ſo great a good. *He was not aſhamed*, ſaith the Apoſtle concerning the faithful Patriarchs, *to be called their God*; to be appropriated in a manner unto them; 1Joh.ii.23. and, *He that acknowledgeth the Son*, ſaith St. John concerning good Chriſtians, ὁ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, *hath* (or poſſeſſeth) *the Father alſo*: and *to ſeek; to find; to draw near to; to cleave unto; to abide with, to abide in*; and ſuch other phraſes frequently do occur in Scripture, denoting that near relation which good men ſtand in toward God; implying that he affords them a continual liberty of acceſs and coming into his eſpecial preſence, that he admits them to a kind of converſe and communion with himſelf, full of ſpiritual benefit and delight; that bearing an eſpecial good-will and favour toward them, he is diſpoſed to exert his infinite wiſdom and power in their behalf; is ready to impart all needful and convenient good unto them (help in their needs, ſupply in wants, protection in dangers; the direction, aſſiſtance, and comfort of his Holy Spirit; pardon of ſins and peace of conſcience; all the bleſſings of grace here, and all the felicities of glory hereafter); ſuch an intereſt, as it were, in God and a title unto him, ſuch a poſſeſſion and enjoyment of him we are capable of obtaining: and as that enjoyment is in itſelf infinitely above all things deſirable; ſo, if we love God, we cannot ſurely but be earneſtly deſirous thereof: a cold indifferency about it, a faint wiſhing for it, a ſlothful tendency after it, are much on this ſide love; it will inflame

Pſ. cxix. 2. Iſa. lxv. 1. Deut.xi.22. Joſh. xxiii. 8. 1Cor.vi.17. Acts xi. 23. Joh. xv. 4. xvii. 21. 1Joh.ii.24.

our heart, it will tranſport our mind, it will beget a vigorous and lively motion of ſoul toward it: for love, you know, is commonly reſembled unto, yea even aſſumes the name of fire; for that it warms the breaſt, agitates the ſpirits, quickens all the powers of ſoul, and ſets them on work in deſire and purſuance of the beloved object: you may imagine as well fire without heat or activity, as love without ſome ardency of deſire. *Longing and thirſting of ſoul; fainting for, and panting after; crying out, and ſtretching forth the hands toward God;* ſuch are the expreſſions ſignifying the good Pſalmiſt's love; by ſo apt and ſo pathetical reſemblances doth he ſet out the vehemency of his deſire to enjoy God. I need not add concerning endeavour; for that by plain conſequence doth neceſſarily follow deſire: the thirſty ſoul will never be at reſt till it have found out its convenient refreſhment: if we, as David did, do *long after God,* we ſhall alſo with him *earneſtly ſeek God;* nor ever be at reſt till we have found him. Coherent with this is a

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Pſal. lxxxiv. 2. xlii. 1. lxiii. 1. cxliii. 6.

3. Third property of this love, that is, a great complacence, ſatisfaction, and delight in the enjoyment of God: in the ſenſe of having ſuch a propriety in him; in the partaking thoſe emanations of favour and beneficence from him; and conſequently in the inſtruments conveying, in the means conducing to ſuch enjoyment: for joy and content are the natural fruits of obtaining what we love, what we much value, what we earneſtly deſire. Yea, what we chiefly love, if we become poſſeſſed thereof, we eaſily reſt ſatisfied therewith, although all other comforts be wanting to us. The covetous perſon for inſtance, who dotes upon his wealth, let him be pinched with the want of conveniences; let his body be wearied with toil; let his mind be diſtracted with care; let him be ſurrounded with obloquy and diſgrace—*at mihi plaudo ipſe domi;* he nevertheleſs enjoys himſelf in beholding his beloved pelf: the ambitious man likewiſe, although his ſtate be full of trouble and diſquiet; though he be the mark of common envy and hatred; though he be expoſed to many croſſes and dangers; yet while he ſtands in

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power and dignity, among all thoſe thorns of care and fear, his heart enjoys much reſt and pleaſure. In like manner we may obſerve thoſe pious men, whoſe hearts were endued with this love, by the preſent ſenſe, or aſſured hope of enjoying God, ſupporting themſelves under all wants and diſtreſſes; *rejoicing*, yea, *boaſting and exulting* in their afflictions; and no wonder, while they conceived themſelves ſecure in the poſſeſſion of their hearts' wiſh; of that which they incomparably valued and deſired above all things; which by experience they have found ſo comfortable and delicious: *O taſte and ſee*, exclaims the Pſalmiſt, inſpired with this paſſion, *O taſte and ſee, that the Lord is good: How excellent is thy loving-kindneſs, O Lord! They* (they who enjoy it) *ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink of the river of thy pleaſures: A day in thy courts is better than a thouſand: My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs:* ſo did thoſe devout practiſers of this duty expreſs the ſatisfaction they felt in God, and in thoſe things whereby he did impart the enjoyment of himſelf unto them. So did *the light of God's* countenance cheer their heart; ſo did *his loving-kindneſs* appear *better than life itſelf unto them*. Hence do they ſo frequently enjoin and exhort us *to be glad; to delight ourſelves; to glory; to rejoice continually in the Lord;* in the ſenſe of his goodneſs, in the hope of his favour; the doing ſo being an inſeparable property of love; to which we adjoin another.

Luke vi. 23. 1 Pet. iv. 13. Rom. v. 3. Col. i. 24. Pſal. xxxiv. 8. xxxvi. 7. Pſal. lxxxiv. 1, 10. lxiii. 5. Neh. ix. 25. Pſal. iv. 6. lxiii. 3. xxxiii. 1. xxxii. 11. cv. 3. cvii. 12. xxxvii. 4.

4. The feeling much diſpleaſure and regret in being deprived of ſuch enjoyment; in the abſence or diſtance as it were of God from us; the loſs or leſſening of his favour; the ſubtraction of his gracious influences from us: for ſurely anſwerable to the love we bear unto any thing will be our grief for the want or loſs thereof: it was a ſhrewd argument which the poet uſed to prove that men loved their monies better than their friends, becauſe—*majore tumultu plorantur nummi, quam funera*—they more lamented the loſs of thoſe than the death of theſe: indeed, that which a man principally affects, if he is be-

reaved thereof, be his condition otherwiſe how proſperous and comfortable ſoever, he cannot be contented; all other enjoyments become unſavoury and unſatisfactory to him. And ſo it is in our caſe, when God, although only for trial, according to his wiſdom and good pleaſure, hides his face, and withdraws his hand; leaving the ſoul in a kind of deſolation and darkneſs; not finding that ready aid in diſtreſs, not feeling that cheerful vivacity in obedience, not taſting that ſweet reliſh of devotion, which have been uſually afforded thereto; if love reſide in the heart, it will ſurely diſpoſe it to a ſenſible grief; it will inſpire ſuch exclamations as thoſe of the Pſalmiſt: *How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy face? Hide not thy face from thy ſervant, for I am in trouble: Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies: Draw nigh unto my ſoul and redeem it.* Even our Saviour himſelf in ſuch a caſe, when God ſeemed for a time to withdraw the light of his countenance, and the protection of his helpful hand from him, (or to frown and lay his heavy hand upon him) had his ſoul περίλυπον ἕως θανάτου, *extremely grieved* and *full of deadly anguiſh*; neither ſurely was it any other cauſe than exceſs of love, which made that temporary deſertion ſo grievous and bitter to him, extorting from his moſt meek and patient heart that woful complaint, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me!* But eſpecially, when *our iniquities have*, as the Prophet expreſſeth it, *ſeparated between our God and us*; and *our ſins have hid his face from us*: when that *thick cloud* hath eclipſed the light of his countenance, and intercepted his gracious influences; when by wilfully offending we have, as the Iſraelites are ſaid to have done, *rejected our God, caſt him off*, and *driven him from us*; ſo depriving ourſelves of propriety in him, and the poſſeſſion of his favour; then if any love be alive in us, it will prompt us, with thoſe good men in their penitential agonies, to be grievouſly ſenſible of, and ſorely to bewail that our wretched condition; there *will not*, if we ſo heartily love God, and value his favour as they did, *be any ſoundneſs in our fleſh, or reſt in our bones*;

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Pſal. lxxxix. 46. lxix. 16. xxx. 7. xlii. 3.

Matt. xxvi. 38. xxvii. 46.

Iſa. lix. 2. Jer. v. 25. Iſa. xliv. 26.

1 Sam. viii. 7. x. 9.

Pſal. vi. xxxv. xxxviii. li. cii. cxxx. cxliii.

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our ſpirit will be overwhelmed within us, and our heart within us deſolate. Our heart will be ſmitten and withered like graſs, upon the conſideration and ſenſe of ſo ineſtimable a loſs. Love will render ſuch a condition very ſad and uneaſy to us; will make all other delights inſipid and diſtaſteful; all our life will become bitter and burthenſome to us; neither, if it in any meaſure abides in us, ſhall we receive content, till by humble deprecation we have regained ſome glimpſe of God's favour, ſome hope of being reinſtated in our poſſeſſion of him. Farther yet,

Pſ. xxxviii. 3. cxliii. 4. cii. 4.

Pſal. vi. 4. xxxviii. 21. li. 11. cii. 2. cxliii. 7.

5. Another property of this love is, to bear the higheſt good-will toward God; ſo as to wiſh heartily and effectually, according to our power, to procure all good to him, and to delight in it; ſo as to endeavour to prevent and to remove all evil, if I may ſo ſpeak, that may befall him, and to be heartily diſpleaſed therewith. Although no ſuch benefit or advantage can accrue to God which may increaſe his eſſential and indefectible happineſs; no harm or damage can arrive that may impair it, (for he can be neither really more or leſs rich, or glorious, or joyful than he is; neither have our deſire or our fear, our delight or our grief, our deſigns or our endeavours any object, any ground in thoſe reſpects;) yet hath he declared, that there be certain intereſts and concernments, which, out of his abundant goodneſs and condeſcenſion, he doth tender and proſecute as his own: as if he did really receive advantage by the good, and prejudice by the bad ſucceſs, reſpectively belonging to them; that he earneſtly deſires, and is greatly delighted with ſome things, very much diſlikes, and is grievouſly diſpleaſed with other things: for inſtance, that he bears a fatherly affection toward his creatures, and earneſtly deſires their welfare; and delights to ſee them enjoy the good he deſigned them; as alſo diſlikes the contrary events; doth commiſerate and condole their miſery; that he is conſequently well pleaſed, when piety and juſtice, peace and order (the chief means conducing to our welfare) do flouriſh; and diſpleaſed, when impiety and iniquity, diſſenſion and diſorder (thoſe

Pſal. xvi. 2. Job xxii. 3.

Jer. ix. 24.

certain ſources of miſchief to us) do prevail; that he is well ſatisfied with our rendering to him that obedience, honour, and reſpect, which are due to him; and highly offended with our injurious and diſreſpectful behaviour toward him, in the commiſſion of ſin and violation of his moſt juſt and holy commandments: ſo that there wants not ſufficient matter of our exerciſing good-will both in affection and action toward God; we are capable both of wiſhing, and (in a manner, as he will interpret and accept it) of doing good to him, by our concurrence with him, in promoting thoſe things which he approves and delights in, and in removing the contrary. And ſo ſurely ſhall we do, if we truly love God: for love, as it would have the object to be its own, as it intends to enjoy it, ſo it would have it in its beſt ſtate, and would put it thereinto, and would conſerve it therein; and would thence contribute all it is able to the welfare, to the ornament, to the pleaſure and content thereof. *What is it*, ſaith Cicero, *to love, but to will or deſire, that the perſon loved ſhould receive the greateſt good that can be?* Love alſo doth reconcile, conform, and unite the inclinations and affections of him who loves, to the inclinations and affections of him who is beloved; *eadem velle, et eadem nolle, to conſent in liking and diſliking of things*, if it be not the cauſe, if it be not the formal reaſon or eſſence, as ſome have made it, it is at leaſt a certain effect of love. If then we truly love God, we ſhall deſire that all his deſigns proſper, that his pleaſure be fulfilled, that all duty be performed, all glory rendered to him: we ſhall be grieved at the wrong, the diſhonour, the diſappointment he receives: eſpecially we ſhall endeavour in our own practice, with holy David, *to perform* πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτῦ, *all that God wills*, deſires, or delights in; to eſchew whatever offends him. Our deſire, our delight, our endeavour will conſpire with and be ſubordinate to his; for it would be a ſtrange kind of love that were conſiſtent with the voluntary doing of that which is hurtful, injurious, or offenſive to that we love; ſuch actions being the proper effects, the natural ſigns of hatred and enmity: *If any man ſay, I love God, and*

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Quid eſt amare, ni velle bon aliquem affici qua maximis. *Cic. de Fi* 2.

Acts xiii. 2

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hateth his brother, he is a liar, ſaith St. John; and, *If any man ſeeth his brother need, and ſhutteth his bowels toward him, how doth the love of God abide in him?* He that in his affections is ſo unlike, ſo contrary unto God; he that is unwilling to comply with God's will in ſo reaſonable a performance; he that in a matter wherein God hath declared himſelf ſo much concerned, and ſo affected therewith, doth not care to croſs him, to diſpleaſe and diſappoint him; how can he with any ſhew of truth, or with any modeſty pretend to love God? Hence it is, that keeping of God's commandments is commonly repreſented to us as the moſt proper expreſſion, as the ſureſt argument of our love to God: *ſhewing mercy to thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments;* they are joined together as terms equivalent, or as inſeparable companions in effect: *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: Ye are my friends,* (that is, not only objects of my affection, but actively friends, bearing affection unto me,) *if ye do whatſoever I command you,* ſaith our Saviour: and, *Whoſo keepeth his word, in him is the love of God truly perfected:* (he hath the truth and ſincerity; he hath the integrity and conſummation of love: without it love is wholly falſe and counterfeit, or very lame and imperfect; ſo the loving and beloved Diſciple teaches us.) For by doing thus, as we ſignify our eſteem of God's wiſdom which directeth us, our dread of his power and juſtice that can puniſh us, our hope in his goodneſs and fidelity to reward us, our regard to his majeſty and authority over us; ſo eſpecially thereby (if our obedience at leaſt be free and cheerful) we expreſs our good will toward him; ſhewing thereby, that we are diſpoſed to do him all the good and gratify him all we can; that his intereſts, his honour, his content are dear and precious to us. And were indeed our *hearts knit unto God* with this bond of perfection, we could not in our wills, and conſequently in our practice, be ſo ſevered from him; we ſhould alſo love heartily all virtue and goodneſs, the neareſt reſemblances of him, and which he chiefly loves; we ſhould do what David ſo oft pre-

1 John iv. 20. iii. 17.

Exod. xx. 6.

John xiv. 21, 23. xv. 14.

1 John iv. 12.

Pſ. lxxxvi. 11.

Col. iii. 14.

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feſſes himſelf to do, *love his law, and greatly delight in his commandments.* With our Saviour, we ſhould *delight to perform his will*; it would (as it was to him) *be our meat and our drink to do it; his yoke would be eaſy* indeed, *and his burthen light* unto us; his yoke ſo eaſy, that we ſhould wear it rather as a jewel about our necks than as a yoke; his burthen ſo light, that we ſhould not feel it as a burthen, but eſteem it our privilege. We ſhould not be ſo dull in apprehending, or ſo ſlack in performing duty; for this ſharp-ſighted affection would preſently diſcern, would readily ſuggeſt it to us; by the leaſt intimation it would perceive what pleaſeth God, and would ſnatch opportunity of doing it: we ſhould not need any arguments to perſuade us, nor any force to compel us, love would inſpire us with ſufficient vigour and alacrity; it would urge and ſtimulate us forward not only *to walk in*, but even, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth it, to *run the ways of God's commandments.*

Pſal. xi. 7. Pſal. cxix. 163, 165, 113, 16, 35, 70, 47, 24, 77. Pſal. i. 2. cxii. 1. xl. 8. Heb. x. 7. John iv. 34. v. 30. Prov. iii. 22. Pſal. cxix. 32.

But let thus much ſerve for explication of the nature of this duty; in order, as was before ſaid, to the direction of our practice, and examination thereof: the particular duties mentioned being comprehended in, or appertaining to the love of God, if we perceive that we practiſe them, we may to our ſatisfaction and comfort infer, that proportionably we are endued with this grace; if not, we have reaſon (ſuch as ſhould beget remorſe and pious ſorrow in us) to ſuſpect we abide in a ſtate of diſaffection or of indifferency toward him. If we find the former good diſpoſition, we ſhould ſtrive to cheriſh and improve it; if the ſecond bad one, we ſhould (as we tender our own welfare and happineſs, as we would avoid utter ruin and miſery) endeavour to remove it.

II. To the effecting of which purpoſes I ſhall next propound ſome means conducible; ſome in way of removing obſtacles, others by immediately promoting the duty.

Of the firſt kind are theſe enſuing:

1. The deſtroying of all loves oppoſite to the love of God, extinguiſhing all affection to things odious and of-

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fenſive to God: mortifying all corrupt and perverſe, all unrighteous and unholy deſires[a]. It agrees with ſouls no leſs than with bodies, that they cannot at once move or tend contrary ways; upward and downward, backward and forward at one time: it is not poſſible we ſhould together truly eſteem, earneſtly deſire, bear ſincere goodwill to things in nature and inclination quite repugnant each to other. No man ever took him for his real friend, who maintains correſpondency, ſecret or open, who joins in acts of hoſtility with his profeſſed enemies: at leaſt we cannot, as we ought, love God with our whole heart, if with any part thereof we affect his enemies; thoſe, which are mortally and irreconcileably ſo; as are all iniquity and impurity, all inordinate luſts both of fleſh and ſpirit: *the carnal mind* (the minding or affecting of the fleſh) *is*, St. Paul tells us, *enmity toward God; for it is not ſubject to the law of God, nor can be;* it is an enemy, even the worſt of enemies, an incorrigibly obſtinate rebel againſt God; and can we then, retaining any love to God or peace with him, comply and conſpire therewith? And, *the friendſhip of the world* (that is, I ſuppoſe, of thoſe corrupt principles, and thoſe vicious cuſtoms which uſually prevail in the world) *is alſo*, St. James tells us, *enmity with God;* ſo that, he adds, *if any man be a friend to the world, he is thereby conſtituted* (he immediately *ipſo facto* becomes) *an enemy to God.* St. John affirms the ſame; *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;* explaining himſelf, that by the world he means thoſe things, which are moſt generally embraced and practiſed therein; *the luſt*, or deſire, *of the fleſh*, (that is, ſenſuality and intemperance,) *the luſt of the eyes*, (that is, envy, covetouſneſs, vain curioſity, and the like,) *the oſtentation*, or boaſting, *of life*, (that is, pride, ambition, vain-glory, arrogance,) qualities as irreconcileably oppoſite to the holy nature and will of God, ſo altogether inconſiſtent with the love of him; begetting in us an averſation and antipathy towards him; rendering his holineſs diſtaſteful to our affections, and his juſtice dreadful to our conſciences; and himſelf

[a] Pſal. xcvii. 10. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.

τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός. Rom. viii. 7.

Jam. iv. 4.

καθίσταται.

1 John ii. 15.

ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς, ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου.

conſequently, his will, his law, his preſence hateful to us: while we take him to be our enemy and to hate us, we ſhall certainly in like manner ſtand affected toward him: this indeed is the main obſtacle, the removal of which will much facilitate the introduction of divine love; it being a great ſtep to reconciliation and friendſhip, to be diſengaged from the adverſe party: we ſhould then eaſily diſcern the beauty of divine goodneſs and ſanctity, when the miſts of ignorance, of error, of corrupt prejudice, ariſing from thoſe groſs carnal affections, were diſſipated; we ſhould better reliſh the ſweet and ſavoury graces of God, when the palate of our mind were purged from vicious tinctures; we ſhould be more ready to hope for peace and favour in his eyes, when our conſciences were freed from the ſenſe of ſuch provocations and defilements. But SERM. XXIII.

2. If we would obtain this excellent grace, we muſt reſtrain our affections toward all other things, however in their nature innocent and indifferent. The young gentleman in the Goſpel had, it ſeems, arrived to the former pitch; having through the courſe of his life abſtained from groſſer iniquities and impurities; ſo far, that our Saviour, in regard to that attainment of his, conceived an affection for him, (he loved him, it is ſaid,) yet was not he ſufficiently diſpoſed to love God; being *in one thing deficient*, that he retained an immoderate affection to his wealth and worldly conveniences; with which ſort of affections the love of God cannot conſiſt: for we much undervalue God, and cannot therefore duly love him, if we deem any thing comparable to him, or conſiderable in worth or uſefulneſs when he comes in competition: if we deem, that the poſſeſſion of any other thing beſide him can confer to our happineſs, or the want thereof can prejudice it, and make us miſerable: no other love ſhould bear any proportion to the love of him; no other object ſhould appear (as indeed none really is) ſimply good, deſirable, or amiable to us. What value St. Paul had of his legal qualifications and privileges, the ſame ſhould we have concerning all other things in appearance pleaſant or

ἔχων. Matt. xix. 20. Mark x. 21.

ὑστέρει σοι ἓν. Luke xviii. 22.

Phil. iii. 8.

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convenient to us; they ought, in regard to God, to *ſeem damage and dung*; not only mean and deſpicable, but even ſordid and loathſome to us; not only unworthy of our regard and deſire, but deſerving our hatred and abhorrency; we ſhould, I ſay, even hate the beſt of them; ſo our Saviour expreſſeth it: *If any man doth not hate his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and ſiſters, and even his own ſoul,* (or his own life) *he cannot be my diſciple;* that is, if any man retain in his heart any affection not infinitely, as it were, leſs than that which he bears to God; if any thing be in compariſon dear and precious to him, he is not diſpoſed to entertain the main point of Chriſt's diſcipline, the ſincere and entire love of God. To *love him*, as he requires, *with all our heart*, implies, that our heart be filled with his love, ſo that no room be left for any other paſſion to enter or dwell there. And indeed ſuch, if we obſerve it, is the nature of our ſoul, we can hardly together harbour earneſt or ſerious affections toward different objects; one of them will prevail and predominate; and ſo doing will not ſuffer the other to remain, but will extrude or extinguiſh it: no heart of man can correſpond with two rivals, but, as our Saviour teacheth us, *it will hate and deſpiſe one, will love and ſtick to the other*; whence he infers, that *we cannot ſerve* (that is, affectionately adhere to) *both God and mammon.* If we have, according to the Pſalmiſt's phraſe, *ſet our hearts upon wealth*, and *will be rich*; (are reſolved to be, as St. Paul expreſſeth it;) if we eagerly aſpire to power and honour, with the Phariſees, *preferring the applauſe of men before the favour of God:* if any worldly or bodily pleaſure, or any curioſity how plauſible ſoever, hath ſeized upon our ſpirits and captivated our affections; if any inferior object, whatever with its apparent ſplendour, ſweetneſs, goodlineſs, convenience hath ſo inveigled our fancy, that we have an exceeding eſteem thereof, and a greedy appetite thereto; that we enjoy it with huge content, and cannot part from it without much regret; that thing doth at preſent take up God's place within us; ſo that our heart is uncapable, at leaſt in due meaſure, of divine

ξημία, σκύβαλα.

Luke xiv. 26.

Matt. vi. 24.

Pſal. lxii. 10.

1 Tim. vi. 9, 17.

John xii. 43.

2 Tim. iv. 10.

love: but if we be indifferently affected toward all such things, and are unconcerned in the presence or absence of them; esteeming them as they are, mean and vain; loving them as they deserve, as inferior and trivial; if, according to St. Paul's direction, *we use them as if we used them not;* it is another good step toward the love of God: the divine light will shine more brightly into so calm and serene a medium: a soul void of other affections will not be only more capable to receive, but apt to suck in that heavenly one; being insensible, in any considerable degree, of all other comforts and complacences, we shall be apt to search after, and reach out at that, which alone can satisfy our understanding and satiate our desires; especially if we add hereto,

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1 Cor. vii. 31.

3. The freeing of our hearts also from immoderate affection to ourselves; (I mean not from a sober desire or an earnest regard to our own true good; for this, as nature enforces to, so all reason allows, and even God's command obligeth us to; nor can it be excessive; but a high conceit of ourselves as worthy or able, a high confidence in any thing we have within us or about us;) for this is a very strong bar against the entrance, as of all other charity, so especially of this; for as the love of an external object doth thrust, as it were, our soul outwards towards it; so the love of ourselves detains it within, or draws it inwards; and consequently these inclinations crossing each other cannot both have effect, but one will subdue and destroy the other. If our mind be—*ipsa suis contenta bonis—satisfied with her own* (taking them for her own) endowments, abilities, or fancied perfections; if we imagine ourselves wise enough to perceive, good enough to choose, resolute enough to undertake, strong enough to achieve, constant enough to pursue whatever is conducible to our real happiness and best content; we shall not care to go farther; we will not be at the trouble to search abroad for that which, in our opinion, we can so readily find, so easily enjoy at home. If we so admire and dote upon ourselves, we thereby put

Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι ὃ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τις ἔχει περισσὸς, καὶ μάταιος παρ' ἄλλου λαμβάνων. *Epict.* i. 9.

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ourſelves into God's ſtead, and uſurp the throne due to him in our hearts; comparing ourſelves to God, and in effect preferring ourſelves before him; thereby conſequently ſhutting out that unparalleled eſteem, that predominant affection we owe to him; while we are buſy in dreſſing and decking, in courting and worſhipping this idol of our fancy, we ſhall be eſtranged from the true object of our devotion; both we ſhall willingly neglect him, and he in juſt indignation will deſert us. But if as all other things, ſo even ourſelves do appear exceedingly vile and contemptible, foul and ugly in compariſon to God; if we *take ourſelves* to be (as truly we are) *mere nothings*, or ſomethings worſe; not only deſtitute of all conſiderable perfections, but full of great defects; blind and fond in our conceits, crooked and perverſe in our wills, infirm and unſtable in all our powers, unable to diſcern, unwilling to embrace, backward to ſet upon, inconſtant in proſecuting thoſe things which are truly good and advantageous to us; if we have, I ſay, this right opinion and judgment of ourſelves, ſeeing within us nothing lovely or deſirable, no proper object there of our eſteem or affection, no bottom to reſt our mind upon, no ground of ſolid comfort at home, we ſhall then be apt to look abroad, to direct our eyes, and ſettle our affections upon ſomewhat more excellent in itſelf, or more beneficial to us, that ſeems better to deſerve our regard, and more able to ſupply our defects. And if all other things about us appear alike deformed and deficient, unworthy our affection and unable to ſatisfy our deſires; then may we be diſpoſed to ſeek, to find, to faſten and repoſe our ſoul upon the only proper object of our love; in whom we ſhall obtain all that we need, infallible wiſdom to guide us, omnipotent ſtrength to help us, infinite goodneſs for us to admire and enjoy.

Gal. vi. 3.

Theſe are the chief obſtacles, the removing of which conduce to the begetting and increaſing the love of God in us. A ſoul ſo cleanſed from love to bad and filthy things, ſo emptied of affection to vain and unprofitable

things, ſo opened and dilated by excluding all conceit of, all confidence in itſelf, is a veſſel proper for the divine love to be infuſed into; into ſo large and pure a vacuity (as finer ſubſtances are apt to flow of themſelves into ſpaces void of groſſer matter) that free and moveable Spirit of divine grace will be ready to ſucceed, and therein to diſperſe itſelf. As all other things in nature, the clogs being removed which hinder them, do preſently tend with all their force to the place of their reſt and well-being; ſo would, it ſeems, our ſouls, being looſed from baſer affections obſtructing them, willingly incline toward God, the natural centre, as it were, and boſom of their affection; would reſume, as Origen ſpeaks, that *natural philtre* (that intrinſic ſpring, or incentive of love) *which all creatures have toward their Creator;* eſpecially, if to theſe we add thoſe poſitive inſtruments, which are more immediately and directly ſubſervient to the production of this love; they are theſe:

φίλτρον ἀναλαμβάνειν φυσικὸν τὸ πρὸς τὸν κτίσαντα. *Orig.* in *Celſ.* p. 135.

1. Attentive conſideration of the divine perfections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehenſion of them.

2. The conſideration of God's works and actions; his works and actions of nature, of providence, of grace.

3. Serious regard and reflection upon the peculiar benefits by the divine goodneſs vouchſafed to ourſelves.

4. An earneſt reſolution and endeavour to perform God's commandments, although upon inferior conſiderations of reaſon; upon hope, fear, deſire to attain the benefits of obedience, to ſhun the miſchiefs from ſin.

5. Aſſiduous prayer to Almighty God, that he in mercy would pleaſe to beſtow his love upon us, and by his grace to work it in us.

But I muſt forbear the proſecution of theſe things, rather than farther treſpaſs upon your patience. Let us conclude all with a good Collect, ſometimes uſed by our Church.

O Lord, who haſt taught us, that all our doings without

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charity are nothing worth, ſend thy Holy Ghoſt, and pour into our hearts that moſt excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before thee; grant this for thine only Son Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTH. xxii. 37.

Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

WHICH is the great commandment? was the queſtion, in anſwer whereto our Saviour returns this text; and that with higheſt reaſon, (diſcernible by every man,) for that of neceſſity the love of God is the principal duty we owe unto him: the great duty indeed, as being largeſt in extent, and comprehending in a manner all other duties of piety; as that which exceeds in proper worth and dignity, (employing the nobleſt faculties of our ſouls in their beſt operations upon the moſt excellent object,) as that which communicates virtue unto, and hath a ſpecial influence upon all other duties; in fine, as that, which is the ſum, the ſoul, the ſpring of all other duties: in diſcourſing whereupon, I did formerly propound this method; firſt, to declare the nature thereof; then, to ſhew ſome means apt to beget and improve that excellent virtue in us; laſtly, to propoſe ſome inducements to the practice thereof. SERM. XXIV.

The firſt part I endeavoured to perform, by deſcribing it according to its eſſential properties (common to love in general, and more particularly to this) of duly eſteeming God, of deſiring, according as we are capable, to poſſeſs and enjoy him, of receiving delight and ſatisfaction in the enjoyment of him, of feeling diſpleaſure in being deprived

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hereof, of bearing good-will unto him, expreſſed by endeavours to pleaſe him, by delighting in the advancement of his glory, by grieving when he is diſſerved or diſhonoured.

The next part I alſo entered upon, and offered to conſideration thoſe means, which ſerve chiefly to remove the impediments of our love to God; which were,

1. The ſuppreſſing all affections oppoſite to this; all perverſe and corrupt, all unrighteous and unholy deſires.

2. The reſtraining or keeping within bounds of moderation our affections toward other things, even in their nature innocent or indifferent.

3. The freeing of our hearts from immoderate affection toward ourſelves; from all conceit of, and confidence in, any qualities or abilities of our own; the diligent uſe of which means I did ſuppoſe would conduce much to the production and increaſe of divine love within us.

To them I ſhall now proceed to ſubjoin other inſtruments more immediately and directly ſubſervient to the ſame purpoſe: whereof the firſt is,

Καθόλου μὲν ἡ τῶν παθῶν κακία διὰ τὴν περὶ θεοῦ ἀγνωσίαν, ἢ ἀδόκιμον γνῶσιν ἐγγίνεται. *Baſil. de Jud. Dei*, tom. ii. p. 261.

1. Attentive conſideration upon the divine perfections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehenſion of them: as counterfeit worth and beauty receive advantage by diſtance and darkneſs; ſo real excellency,—*ſi propius ſtes, te capiet magis*—the greater light you view it in, the nearer you approach it, the more ſtrictly you examine it, the more you will approve and like it: ſo the more we think of God, the better we know him, the fuller and clearer conceptions we have of him, the more we ſhall be apt to eſteem and deſire him; the more excellent in himſelf, the more beneficial to us he will appear. Hence is the knowledge of God repreſented in holy writ not only as a main inſtrument of religion, but as an eſſential character thereof: as equivalent to the being well affected toward God: *O continue*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *thy loving-kindneſs unto them that know thee;* that is, to all religious people. And, *This*, ſaith our Saviour, *is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt*

2 Pet. ii. 20. Pſal. xxxvi. 10. ix. 10. Iſa. v. 13. xi. 9. Hoſ. ii. 10. John xvii. 3.

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whom thou haſt ſent; knowledge of them implying all good affections toward them: as on the other ſide, ignorance of God denotes diſaffection or want of affection toward God: *Now the ſons of Eli,* it is ſaid, *were ſons of Belial, they knew not the Lord:* and, *He that loveth not,* ſaith St. John, *doth not know God;* the want of love to God is an evident ſign, a natural effect of ignorance concerning him: indeed conſidering the nature of our mind, and its ordinary method of operation, it ſeems impoſſible, that ſuch perfection diſcerned ſhould not beget anſwerable reverence and affection thereto: if beautiful ſpectacles, harmonious ſounds, fragrant odours, delicate ſavours do neceſſarily and certainly pleaſe the reſpective ſenſes; why ſhould not with the like ſure efficacy the proper objects of our mind affect it, if duly repreſented and conveyed thereto? If the wit of the moſt ingenious artiſts, the cunning of the deepeſt politicians, the wiſdom of the ſageſt philoſophers are but mere blindneſs and ſtupidity in compariſon to the wiſdom of God; the loweſt inſtance or expreſſion of whoſe wiſdom (his τὸ μωρὸν, *his folly,* as St. Paul ſpeaks) *is wiſer than men,* doth excel the reſults of man's higheſt wiſdom; yet them we admire and commend in men, why then do we not much more adore the divine wiſdom? If the abilities of them who dexterouſly manage great buſineſs, or achieve proſperouſly great exploits are indeed mere impotency in regard to God's power; *whoſe weakneſs* (that is, the ſmalleſt effects of whoſe power) is, as St. Paul again tells us, *ſtronger than men,* ſurpaſſes the utmoſt reſults of human endeavours: yet thoſe things in men we extol and celebrate, how can we then forbear to reverence the divine power? If the diſpenſers of freeſt and largeſt bounty among men, the nobleſt patriots, the moſt munificent benefactors, the moſt tenderly affectionate friends be in reſpect of God unworthy to be counted or called good, (as our Saviour tells us; *If ye being bad know to give good things;* and, *There is none good but God;*) yet ſuch perſons are much beloved and applauded: how then can we abſtain from paying the like meaſure of affection and reſpect to the divine good-

Jer. xxii. 16. xxiv. 7. xxxi. 34. 2 Cor. x. 5. Iſa. i. 3. Jer. xix. 8, 6. x. 25. 1 Theſſ. iv. 5. 1 Sam. ii. 12. 1 John iv. 8. 1 Cor. i. 25. Matt. vii. 11. Luke xi. 13. Matt. xix. 17.

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neſs? If good qualities ſo inferior and defective obtain ſo much from us, whence comes it that the infinitely ſuperior and moſt perfect excellencies of God do not beget in their proportion a ſuitable regard and veneration in us toward him? whence, if not either from our not firmly believing them, or not rightly apprehending them, or not attentively conſidering them? Our belief of them in groſs and at large we may ſuppoſe, as connected with the belief of God's exiſtence, and included in the very notion of God; the defect therefore muſt proceed from the remaining cauſes, want of a right apprehenſion, or neglect of attentive conſideration about them: as to the firſt of theſe; it is common for men to have confuſed, imperfect, and wrong conceptions about the divine attributes, eſpecially in the receſſes of their mind; which although they ſpare to utter with their mouths, yet they vent in their practice: if we, for inſtance, imagine that we can comprehend the extent of God's deſigns, or fathom the depth of his counſels; if we meaſure and model his reaſons of proceeding according to our fancy, (as *if his thoughts were as our thoughts, and his ways as our ways*; or, as if he did *ſee as man ſees*;) if we can *bleſs ourſelves in following our own imaginations*, counſels, and devices, although repugnant to the reſolutions of divine wiſdom; taking theſe not to befit, or not to concern us, as we find many in the Scripture reproved for doing; we greatly miſtake and undervalue that glorious attribute of God, his wiſdom; and no wonder then, if we do not upon account thereof duly reverence and love God: likewiſe if we concerning the divine power conceit, that, notwithſtanding it, we ſhall be able to accompliſh our unlawful deſigns; that *we* may, as it is in Job, *harden our hearts againſt him and proſper*; that we can anywiſe either withſtand or evade his power, (as alſo many are intimated to do, in Scripture; even generally all thoſe who dare preſumptuouſly to offend God,) we alſo miſconceive of that excellent attribute; and the contempt of God, rather than love of him, will thence ariſe. If, concerning the divine goodneſs and holineſs, we imagine that God is diſaffected toward his creatures, (an-

Iſa. lv. 8. 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Deut. xxix. 19. Pſal. lxxxi. 12. cvii. 11. Iſa. lxv. 2. liii. 6. Jer. xviii. 12. Hoſ. x. 12. viii. 12. Pſal. lxxiii. 11. x. 11. xciv. 7. Job ix. 4. Iſa. xlv. 9. x. 15. liv. 17. 1 Cor. x. 22. Deut. xxxiii. 8. Dan. v. 23. Amos ix. 2. Iſa. ii. 19. Jer. xvi. 16. Deut. xxviii. 29.

tecedently to all demerits, or bad qualifications in them,) yea indifferent in affection toward them; inclinable to do them harm, or not propense to do them good; if we deem him apt to be harsh and rigorous in his proceedings, to exact performances unsuitable to the strength he hath given us, to impose burthens intolerable upon us; will not such thoughts be apt to breed in us toward God (as they would toward any other person so disposed) rather a servile dread, (little different from downright hatred,) or an hostile aversation, than a genuine reverence, or a kindly affection toward him? If we fancy him, like to pettish man, apt to be displeased without cause, or beyond measure, for our doing somewhat innocent, (neither bad in itself, nor prejudicial to public or private good,) or for our omitting that, which no law, no good reason plainly requires of us; what will such thoughts but sour our spirits toward him, make us fearful and suspicious of him; which sort of dispositions are inconsistent with true love? If, on the other side, we judge him fond and partial in his affections; or slack and easy, as it were, in his proceedings; apt to favour us although we neglect him; to indulge us in our sins, or connive at our miscarriages; will not such thoughts rather incline us in our hearts to slight him, and in our actions insolently to dally with him, than heartily and humbly to love him? If we conceit his favour procured, or his anger appeased by petty observances, perhaps without any good rule or reason affected by ourselves; when we neglect duties of greater worth and consequence, *the more weighty matters of the Law;* what is this but instead of God to reverence an idol of our own fancy; to yield unto him (who is only pleased with holy dispositions of mind, with real effects of goodness) not duties of humble love, but acts of presumption and flattery? But if, contrariwise, we truly conceive of God's wisdom, that his counsels are always throughly good, and that we are concerned both in duty and interest to follow them, although exceeding the reach of our understanding, or contrary to the suggestions of our fancy; concerning his power, that it will certainly interpose itself

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Num. xiv. 41. 2 Chron. xiii. 12.

Τόν γε θεὸν ὑρητέον ἔχειν ἦθος τοιοῦτον, ὅγε τι αὐτὸς μισεῖ. *Plat. de Leg.* x.

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to the hindrance of our bad projects, that it will be in vain to conteſt therewith, that we muſt ſubmit unto, or ſhall be cruſhed by his hand; concerning his goodneſs, that as he is infinitely good and benign, ſo he is alſo perfectly holy and pure; as he wiſheth us all good, and is ready to promote it, ſo he deteſteth our ſins, nor will ſuffer us to do himſelf, ourſelves, and our neighbour any wrong; as moſt bountiful in diſpenſing his favours, ſo not prodigal of them, or apt to caſt them away on ſuch as little value them, and do not endeavour to anſwer them; as a faithful rewarder of all true virtue and piety, ſo a ſevere chaſtiſer of all iniquity and profaneneſs; as full of mercy and pity toward them, who are ſenſible of their unworthineſs, and penitent for their faults, ſo an implacable avenger of obſtinate and incorrigible wickedneſs: in fine, as a true friend to us, if we be not wilful enemies to him, and deſirous of our welfare, if we do not perverſely render ourſelves incapable thereof; ſo withal jealous of his own honour, reſolute to maintain and vindicate his juſt authority, careful to uphold the intereſts of right and truth, and to ſhew the diſtinction he makes between good and evil; if we have, I ſay, ſuch conceptions of God, (agreeable to what his word and his doings repreſent him to us,) how can we otherwiſe than bear a moſt high reſpect, a moſt great affection unto him? A prince ſurely endued with ſuch qualities; wiſe and powerful, good and juſt together; tendering the good of his people, yet preſerving the force of his laws; deſigning always what is beſt, and conſtantly purſuing his good intentions; tempering bounty and clemency with needful juſtice and ſeverity; we ſhould all commend and extol as worthy of moſt affectionate veneration; how much more then ſhall we be ſo affected toward him, in whom we apprehend all thoſe excellencies to concur without any imperfection or allay? eſpecially if by attention we impreſs thoſe conceptions upon our hearts; for how true and proper ſoever, if they be only ſlight and tranſient, they may not ſuffice to this intent; if they paſs away as a flaſh, they will not be able to kindle in us any ſtrong affection.

Iſa. v. 4. Hab. i. 13. Pſal. v. 4. xi. 5, &c.

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But if ſuch abſtracted conſideration of the divine perfections will not alone wholly avail, let us add hereto as a farther help toward the production and increaſe of this divine grace in us,

2. The conſideration of God's works and actions; his works of nature, his acts of providence, his works and acts of grace; the careful meditating upon theſe will be apt to breed, to nouriſh, to improve, and augment this affection. Even the contemplation of the lower works of nature, of this viſible frame of things, (upon which indeed many perſpicuous characters of divine perfection, of immenſe power, of admirable wiſdom, of abundant goodneſs are engraven,) hath in many minds excited a very high degree of reverence and good affection toward God: the devouteſt perſons (the holy Pſalmiſt particularly) we may obſerve frequent in this practice, enflaming their hearts with love, and elevating them in reverence toward God, by ſurveying the common works of God, by viewing and conſidering the magnificent vaſtneſs and variety, the goodly order and beauty, the conſtant duration and ſtability of thoſe things we ſee; in remarking the general bounty and munificence with which this great *Paterfamilias* hath provided for the neceſſary ſuſtenance, for the convenience, for the defence, for the relief, for the delight and ſatisfaction of his creatures: even in the contemplation of theſe things being raviſhed with admiration and affection, how often do they thus exclaim: *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wiſdom haſt thou made them all. The earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord: the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy! Great is our Lord, and of great power; his underſtanding is infinite: All thy works ſhall praiſe thee, O Lord*; with ſuch reflections, I ſay, upon thoſe common, yet admirable and excellent works of God (which we perhaps with a regardleſs eye unprofitably paſs over) did thoſe good men kindle and foment pious affections toward God. The ſame effect may alſo the conſidering the very common proceedings of divine providence beget in us; ſuch as are diſcernible to every attentive mind both from hiſtory and daily experience;

Pſal. viii. xix. cxlv. civ. cxlvii.

Pſal. xxxiii. 5. cxix. 64. cxlv. 10. cxlvii. 4, &c.

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conſidering God's admirable condeſcenſion in regarding and ordering human affairs both for common benefit, and for relief of particular neceſſities, his ſupplying the general needs of men, relieving the poor, ſuccouring the weak and helpleſs, protecting and vindicating the oppreſſed, his ſeaſonable encouraging and rewarding the good, reſtraining and chaſtiſing the bad: even ſuch obſervations are productive of love to God in thoſe, who, according to that duty intimated by the prophet, *do regard the works of the Lord, and conſider the operations of his hands: They who are wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, they,* as the Pſalmiſt tells, *ſhall underſtand the loving-kindneſs of the Lord;* underſtand it practically, ſo as to be duly affected thereby; and ſo accordingly we find the conſideration of theſe things applied by the great guides and patterns of our devotion. But eſpecially the ſtudy and contemplation of thoſe more high and rare proceedings of God, in managing his gracious deſign of our redemption from ſin and miſery, wherein a wiſdom ſo unſearchable and a goodneſs ſo aſtoniſhing declare themſelves, are moſt proper and effectual means of begetting divine love: if the conſideration of God's eternal care for our welfare, of his deſcending to the loweſt condition for our ſake, of his willingly undertaking and patiently undergoing all kinds of inconvenience, of diſgrace, of bitter pain and ſorrow for us; of his freely offering us mercy, and earneſtly wooing us to receive it, even when offenders, when enemies, when rebels againſt him; of his bearing with exceeding patience all our neglects of him, all our injuries towards him; of his preparing a treaſure of perfect and endleſs bliſs, and uſing all means poſſible to bring us unto the poſſeſſion thereof; if, I ſay, conſidering thoſe wonderful ſtrains of goodneſs will not affect us, what can do it? How miſerably cold and damp muſt our affections be, if all thoſe powerful rays (ſo full of heavenly light and heat) ſhining through our minds cannot inflame them? how deſperately hard and tough muſt our hearts be, if ſuch incentives cannot ſoften and melt them? Is it not an apathy more than ſtoical,

Iſa. v. 12. Pſal. xxviii. 5 cvii. 43. lxiv. 9. cxi. 2. lxxvii. 11. cxliii. 5.

more than ſtony, which can ſtand immoveable before ſo mighty inducements to paſſion? Is it not a horridly prodigious inſenſibility to think upon ſuch expreſſions of kindneſs without feeling affection reciprocal? But if the conſideration of God's general and public beneficence will not touch us ſufficiently, let us farther hereto adjoin, SERM. XXIV.

3. Serious reflections upon the peculiar (perſonal or private) benefits by the divine goodneſs vouchſafed unto ourſelves. There is, I ſuppoſe, ſcarce any man, who may not, if he be not very ſtupid and regardleſs, have obſerved, beſide the common effects of God's univerſal care and bounty wherein he partakes, even ſome particular expreſſions and teſtimonies of divine favour diſpenſed unto him by God's hand, (apt to convince him of God's eſpecial providence, care, and good-will to him particularly, and thereby to draw him unto God,) both in relation to his temporal and to his ſpiritual ſtate; in preventing and preſerving him from miſchiefs imminent, in opportune relief, when he was preſſed with want, or ſurpriſed by danger; in directing him to good, and diverting him from evil. Every man's experience, I ſay and ſuppoſe, will inform him that he hath received many ſuch benefits from a hand, inviſible indeed to ſenſe, yet eaſily diſcernible, if he do attend to the circumſtances wherein, to the ſeaſons when they come; it is natural to every man being in diſtreſs, from which he cannot by any preſent or viſible means extricate himſelf, to ſtretch forth his hand and lift up his voice toward heaven, making his recourſe to divine help; and it is as natural for God to regard the needs, to hearken to the cries, to ſatisfy the deſires of ſuch perſons; for, *The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him: he openeth his hand, and ſatisfieth the deſire of every living thing: He will be a refuge to the oppreſſed, a refuge in times of trouble: He ſatisfieth the longing ſoul, and filleth the hungry ſoul with goodneſs: They that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing: Look at the generations of old and ſee; did ever any truſt in the Lord and was forſaken? or whom did he ever deſpiſe that called upon him? This poor man* (this, and that, any poor man,) *cried, and* Pſal. cxlv. 16, 18. cvii. 8. xxxiv. 6, 10. ix. 9. Eccluſ. ii. 10.

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the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles;) since then no man in all likelihood hath not some occasion of God's especial favour and assistance, and God is always so ready to afford them, we may reasonably presume that every man doth sometime receive them, and is thereby obliged to return a grateful affection to him, not only as to a common benefactor, but as to his particular friend and patron. However there is none of us who may not perceive himself singularly indebted to God's patience in forbearing to punish him, to his mercy in pardoning and passing over innumerable offences committed against him: the renowned penitent in the Gospel did *love much, because much was forgiven her:* and who is there of us, that hath not the same reason to love much? Who is there that, at least according to God's inclination and intention, hath not had much forgiven him? Whom have not *the riches of divine goodness and long-suffering attended* upon *in order to his repentance?* Who hath not been in so great degree ungrateful, unfruitful, and unprofitable, that he hath not abundant reason to acknowledge God's especial grace in bearing with him, and to confess with Jacob, that he is *less than the least of all God's mercies?* If any such there were, he should have no less cause to be affected with the abundance of that grace, which so preserved him from sins and provocations. For if we stand, it is he that *upholdeth us;* if we fall, it is he that *raiseth us;* it is his especial favour that either we avoid sin, or sinning escape punishment. Now then God having by many real evidences declared such particular affection toward us, can we, considering thereon, do otherwise than say to ourselves, after St. John, *Nos ergo diligamus Deum, quoniam prior dilexit nos; Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us:* surely in all ingenuity, according to all equity, we are bound to do so; the reason and nature of things doth require it of us: all other loves, even those of the baser sort, are able to propagate themselves; (to continue and enlarge their kind;) are commonly fruitful and effectual in producing their like: how strangely then unnatural and monstrous is it, that this love only,

Luke vii. 47.

Rom. ii. 4.

Luke xvii. 10.

Psal. cxxx. 3.

Gen. xxxii. 10.

Ps. xxxvii. 23. cxlvi. 8.

1 John iv. 19.

Ἔστι χάρις γὰρ τὴν χάριν τίκτουσ' ἀεί. *Soph.*

this ſo vigorous and perfect love, ſhould be barren and impotent as it were? *If you love thoſe that love you,* ſaith our Saviour, *what reward have you?* (what reward can you pretend to for ſo common, ſo neceſſary a performance?) *do not even the publicans do the ſame?* (the publicans, men not uſually of the beſt natures, or tendereſt hearts, yet they do thus.) And, again ſaith he, *If you love thoſe who love you, what thank is it? for even ſinners love thoſe that love them;* (ſinners, men not led by conſcience of duty, or regard to reaſon, but hurried with a kind of blind and violent force, by inſtinct of nature, do ſo much, go ſo far.) If thus men, both by nature and cuſtom moſt untractable, the leaſt guided by rules of right, of reaſon, of ingenuity; yea, not only the moſt barbarous men, but even the moſt ſavage beaſts are ſenſible of courteſies, return a kind of affection unto them who make much of them, and do them good; what temper are we of, if all that bounty we experience cannot move us; if God's daily *loading us with his benefits,* if his *crowning us with loving-kindneſs and tender mercies,* if all thoſe *ſhowers of bleſſings,* which he continually poureth down upon our heads, do not produce ſome good degree of correſpondent affection in us? It cannot ſurely proceed altogether from a wretched baſeneſs of diſpoſition, that we are ſo cold and indifferent in our affection toward God, or are ſometimes ſo averſe from loving him; it muſt rather in great part come from our not obſerving carefully, not frequently calling to mind, not earneſtly conſidering what God hath done for us, how exceedingly we ſtand obliged to his goodneſs, from our following that untoward generation of men, who were not, it is ſaid, *mindful of the wonders which God did among them; who remembered not his hand, nor the day that he delivered them;* rather following, I ſay, ſuch careleſs and *heartleſs people,* (ſo they are termed,) than imitating that excellent perſon's diſcretion, who conſtantly did *ſet God's loving-kindneſs before his eyes,* who frequently did thus raiſe his mind, and rouſe up his affections; *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name. Bleſs*

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Matt. v. 46.

Luke vi. 32.

Pſal. lxviii. 19. ciii. 14. Ezek. xxxiv. 26.

Neh. ix. 17. Pſal. lxxviii. 10, 42.

Deut. v. 29. xxix. 4.

Pſ. xxvi. 3.

Pſal. ciii.

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To theſe means I add that,

4. A ſpecial help to breed in us this holy diſpoſition of ſoul will be the ſetting ourſelves in good earneſt, with a ſtrong and conſtant reſolution, to endeavour the performance of all our duty toward God, and keeping his commandments although upon inferior conſiderations of reaſon, ſuch as we are capable of applying to this purpoſe; regards of fear, of hope, of deſire to avoid the miſchiefs ariſing from ſin, or attaining the benefits enſuing upon virtue. If we cannot immediately raiſe our hearts to that higher pitch of acting from that nobler principle of love, let us however apply that we can reach unto practice, ſtriving as we are able to perform what God requires of us; exerciſing ourſelves, as to material acts, in keeping a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward man; the doing which, as it may in time diſcover the excellency of goodneſs to our mind, ſo it will by degrees reconcile our affections thereto; then, by God's bleſſing, (who graciouſly regards the meaneſt endeavours toward good; who *deſpiſeth not the day of ſmall things;* who will *not quench the ſmoking flax, nor break the bruiſed reed,*) from doing good out of a ſober regard to our own welfare, we ſhall come to like it in itſelf, and conſequently to love him, unto whoſe nature, and to whoſe will, it renders us conformable: for as doing ill breeds a diſlike to goodneſs, and an averſation from him who himſelf is full thereof, and who rigorouſly exacts it of us; as a bad conſcience removes expectation of good from God, and begets a ſuſpicion of evil from him, conſequently ſtifling all kindneſs toward him; ſo, doing well, we ſhall become acquainted with it, and friends thereto; a hearty approbation, eſteem, and good-liking thereof will enſue; finding by experience, that indeed the ways of wiſdom, vir-

Iſa. xlii. 1. Zech. iv. 10.

tue, and piety are pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace; SERM. that the fruits of conſcientious practice are health to our XXIV. body and to our ſoul, ſecurity to our eſtate and to our reputation, reſt in our mind, and comfort in our conſcience: goodneſs will become precious in our eyes, and he who commends it to us, being himſelf eſſential goodneſs, will appear moſt venerable and moſt amiable, we ſhall then become diſpoſed to render him, what we perceive he beſt deſerves, entire reverence and affection.

5. But I commend farther, as a moſt neceſſary mean of attaining this diſpoſition, aſſiduous earneſt prayer unto God, that he would in mercy beſtow it on us, and by his grace work it in us: which practice is indeed doubly conducible to this purpoſe; both in way of impetration, and by real efficacy: it will not fail to obtain it as a gift from God; it will help to produce it as an inſtrument of God's grace.

Upon the firſt account it is abſolutely neceſſary; for it is from God's free repreſentation of himſelf as lovely to our minds, and drawing our hearts unto him, (although ordinarily in the uſe of the means already mentioned, or ſome like to them,) that this affection is kindled; our bare conſideration is too cold, our rational diſcourſe too faint: we cannot ſufficiently recollect our wandering thoughts, we cannot ſtrongly enough impreſs thoſe proper incentives of love upon our hearts, (our hearts ſo damped with ſenſual deſires, ſo clogged and peſtered with earthly inclinations,) ſo as to kindle in our ſouls this holy flame; it can only be effected by a light ſhining from God, by a fire coming from heaven: as all others, ſo more eſpecially this queen of graces muſt proceed from the Father of lights, and Giver of all good gifts: he alone, who is love, can be the parent of ſo goodly an offspring, can beget this lively image of himſelf within us: it is the principal *fruit of* Gal. v. 22. *God's Holy Spirit*, nor can it grow from any other root than from it; it is called the *love of the Spirit*, as its moſt Rom. xv. ſignal and peculiar effect: in fine, *the love of God*, as St. 30. Paul expreſsly teaches us, *is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us*; given, but that not without aſk-

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ing, without ſeeking; a grace ſo excellent, God, we may be aſſured, will not diſpenſe, a gift ſo precious he will not beſtow on them, who do not care to look after it, who will not vouchſafe to beg it: if we are not willing to acknowledge our want thereof; if we refuſe to expreſs our deſire of it; if we will not ſhew that we regard and value it; if, when God freely offers it, and invites us to receive it, (he doth ſo by offering his Holy Spirit, the fountain thereof, unto us,) we will not decently apply ourſelves to him for it, how can we expect to obtain it? God hath propounded this condition, (and it is ſurely no hard, no grievous condition,) *if we aſk we ſhall receive*; he hath expreſsly promiſed that *he will give his Spirit* (his Spirit of love) *to them who aſk it*: we may be therefore ſure, performing the condition duly, to obtain it; and as ſure, neglecting that, we deſerve to go without.

Luke xi. 9, 13. Matt. xxi. 22. vii. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. 2 Chron. xv. 2.

Prayer then is upon this account a needful means; and it is a very profitable one upon the ſcore of its own immediate energy or virtue: for as by familiar converſe (together with the delights and advantages attending thereon) other friendſhips are begot and nouriſhed, ſo even by that acquaintance, as it were, with God, which devotion begets, by experience therein how ſweet and good he is, this affection is produced and ſtrengthened. As want of intercourſe weakens and diſſolves friendſhip; ſo if we ſeldom come at God, or little converſe with him, it is not only a ſign, but will be a cauſe of eſtrangement and diſaffection toward him: according to the nature of the thing, prayer hath peculiar advantages above other acts of piety, to this effect: therein not only as in contemplation the eye of our mind (our intellectual part) is directed toward God; but our affections alſo (the hand of our ſoul by which we embrace good, the feet thereof by which we purſue it) are drawn out and fixed upon him; we not only therein behold his excellencies, but in a manner feel them and enjoy them; our hearts alſo being thereby ſoftened and warmed by deſire become more ſuſceptive of love. We do in the performance of this duty approach nearer to God, and conſequently God draws

πολλὰς μὲν φιλίας ἀπροσηγορία λύλυσι.

nearer to us, (as St. James aſſures; *Draw near*, ſaith he, *unto God, and he will draw near to you*,) and thereby we partake more fully and ſtrongly of his gracious influences; therein indeed he moſt freely communicates his grace, therein he makes us moſt ſenſible of his love to us, and thereby diſpoſeth us to love him again. I add, that true (fervent and hearty) prayer doth include and ſuppoſe ſome acts of love, or ſome near tendencies thereto; whence, as every habit is corroborated by acts of its kind, ſo by this practice divine love will be confirmed and increaſed. Theſe are the means, which my meditation did ſuggeſt as conducing to the production and growth of this moſt excellent grace in our ſouls. SERM. XXIV. Jam. iv. 8.

III. I ſhould laſtly propound ſome inducements apt to ſtir us up to the endeavour of procuring it, and to the exerciſe thereof, by repreſenting to your conſideration the bleſſed fruits and benefits (both by way of natural cauſality and of reward) accruing from it; as alſo the woful conſequences and miſchiefs ſpringing from the want thereof. How being endued with it perfects and advances our nature, rendering it in a manner and degree divine, by reſemblance to God, (who is full thereof, ſo full that he is called love,) by approximation, adherence, and union, in a ſort, unto him; how it ennobles us with the moſt glorious alliance poſſible, rendering us the friends and favourites of the ſovereign King and Lord of all, brethren of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven; enriches us with a right and title to the moſt ineſtimable treaſures, (thoſe which *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath prepared for them that love him*,) a ſure poſſeſſion of the ſupreme good, of all that God is able to beſtow, all whoſe wiſdom and power, whoſe counſel and care it eternally engageth for our benefit; how all ſecurity and welfare, all reſt and peace, all joy and happineſs attend upon it; for that *the Lord preſerveth all them that love him*, (preſerveth them in the enjoyment of all good, in ſafety from all danger and miſchief,) and that *to thoſe who love God all things cooperate for their good*: how incom- 1 Cor. ii. 9. Pſal. cxlv. 20. Rom. viii. 28.

SERM. XXIV.

parable a ſweetneſs and delight accompany the practice thereof, far ſurpaſſing all other pleaſures; perfectly able to content our minds, to ſuſtain and comfort us even in the want of all other ſatisfactions, yea under the preſſure of whatever moſt grievous afflictions can befall us. How contrariwiſe the want thereof will depreſs us into a ſtate of greateſt imperfection and baſeneſs, ſetting us at the greateſt diſtance from God in all reſpects, both in ſimilitude of nature, and as to all favourable regard, or beneficial communication from him; caſting us into a wretched and diſgraceful conſortſhip with the moſt degenerate creatures, the accurſed fiends, who, for diſaffection and enmity toward God, are baniſhed from all happineſs; how it extremely impoveriſheth and beggareth us, diveſting us of all right to any good thing, rendering us incapable of any portion, but that of utter darkneſs; how it excludeth us from any ſafety, any reſt, any true comfort or joy, and expoſeth us to all miſchief and miſery imaginable; all that being deprived of the divine protection, preſence, and favour, being made objects of the divine anger, hatred, and ſevere juſtice, being abandoned to the malice of hell, being driven into utter darkneſs and eternal fire doth import or can produce. I ſhould alſo have commended this love to you by comparing it with other loves, and ſhewing how far in its nature, in its cauſes, in its properties, in its effects it excelleth them: even ſo far as the object thereof in excellency doth tranſcend all other objects of our affection; how this is grounded upon the higheſt and ſureſt reaſon; others upon accounts very low and mean, commonly upon fond humour and miſtake; this produceth real, certain, immutable goods; others at beſt terminate only in goods apparent, unſtable, and tranſitory; this is moſt worthy of us, employing all our faculties in their nobleſt manner of operation upon the beſt object; others miſbeſeem us, ſo that in purſuing them we diſgrace our underſtanding, miſapply our deſires, diſtemper our affections, miſpend our endeavours. I ſhould have enlarged upon theſe conſiderations; and ſhould have adjoined ſome particular advantages of this grace; as, for

inſtance, that the procuring thereof is the moſt ſure, the moſt eaſy, the moſt compendious way of attaining all others; of ſweetening and ingratiating all obedience to us; of making the hardeſt yoke eaſy, and the heavieſt burden light unto us. In fine, I ſhould have wiſhed you to conſider, that its practice is not only a mean and way to happineſs, but our very formal happineſs itſelf; the real enjoyment of the beſt good we are capable of; that in which alone heaven itſelf (the felicity of ſaints and angels) doth conſiſt; which more than comprehends in itſelf all the benefits of higheſt dignity, richeſt plenty, and ſweeteſt pleaſure. But I ſhall forbear entering upon ſo ample and fruitful ſubjects of meditation, and conclude with that good Collect of our Church: SERM. XXIV.

O Lord, who haſt prepared for them that love thee ſuch good things as paſs man's underſtanding; pour into our hearts ſuch love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promiſes, which exceed all that we can deſire: through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.